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## THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

VOLUME EIGHTEENTH.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM COLLINS, S. FREDERICK ST.

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ON

# CHURCH EXTENSION:

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL

# PREFACE.

We preface this volume by a brief sketch of Church Extension in Scotland.

At its commencement in 1834, there had only been added 66 unendowed places of worship during the whole of the past and present century. These generally were built at the expense of their respective congregations, who, so long as the original cost was unpaid, had to defray the interest of the debt in the form of a higher seat-rent.

The benefit of the new erections from 1834 is that they are raised by gratuitous subscription, so as that their expense forms no charge on the seat-rent, which, in virtue of being somewhat lower than before, admits of a lower descent, among a more destitute and hitherto neglected population.

It is obvious that we shall not by this expedient alone be enabled to overtake all or even the greater part of our outcast families. Beside the want of churches, there is a distinct and additional, and withal most urgent want, which, even on the supposition that the architecture of all the fabrics

were completed, would continue unprovided for. Our great aim in these gratuitous erections is, that the people may, *pro tanto*, be relieved of the price they should otherwise be compelled to pay for their Church Accommodation—yet the whole amount of this relief, averagely speaking, would not exceed one shilling on each individual sitting, leaving still, in the maintenance of the clergyman and other annual expenses, the necessity of a rent far too high and heavy for the circumstances of the general population. After that we have overcome one obstacle by the erection of a church in any given neighbourhood, we feel as if brought into nearer contact with another and more formidable obstacle which stands behind it; and that till this is removed, we have scarcely made any sensible advance towards the great end of a universal Christian education for the common people. What we aim at is not accommodation only, but cheap accommodation—so cheap as to congregate the lower orders in the house of God, not by individuals only, but to congregate them in families, that the men of handicraft and hard labour, instead of being scarcely, as now, in circumstances for attending singly, may be enabled to possess themselves of whole pews, both for themselves and for their children. We shall never be able to achieve this while the produce of the seat-rents forms the only fund out of which to support the clergyman; and unless this be helped at least from some other quarter than the means of the people themselves, we despair of ever conducting our establishment back again to that state of efficiency which it had in other days, when it found

its way into the bosom of every household, and opened its solemn assemblies to all the population. To provide churches is but the commencement of our enterprise, the first and I would say the shortest step towards a full and right accommodation for the working classes of society. The next and greatest step is to relieve the people of the annual charges which are necessarily attendant on the service of the churches. The first, we hope, may be done by private exertion. For the second we look to the more powerful hand of a Christian and paternal government—a government that will regard the prevention of disorder and crime as an object worthier of its price, than is the punishment of these; or rather that looks upon the spread of intelligence and virtue among the people as the highest aim of true patriotism, and altogether worthy of the fostering care of the rulers of the commonwealth.

When conducting our investigation into the wants of any given neighbourhood, we, in addition to the two questions generally put, and which are confined to the two elements of the population and the church-room, made further inquiries, both as to the distance of large bodies of householders from their places of worship; and, most important of all, in its application to large towns, the proportion in given localities between the number of the people and the number of seat-holders among them *of all denominations*, in and out of the Establishment. With these two articles of information, we are enabled effectually to expose the egregious fallacy of those who reason against the extension of our

church, because of superfluous church-room or unlet sittings, whether in the Establishment or among the Dissenters. For, first, when the people are too distant from church, it is of no earthly consequence to be told that there is superfluous accommodation twenty miles off from them. Theirs at least is a case of unambiguous necessity; and we are not so ravenously set on more churches as to desire the erection of one in any particular instance, save when the real and practical destitution of the families in that, as in every other instance, is clearly and unequivocally made out. And, in like manner, when in some plebeian district of a town we have ascertained that there are but a hundred seat-holders *of all denominations* among a thousand people, we hold it an empty consolation to be told of the pews unrented and the pews unoccupied, whether in the churches or meeting-houses of its own immediate vicinity. We shall find in every example of such a melancholy disproportion between the number of people and the number of church-goers, that there is the operation of one or other or both of these two causes —first, a higher seat-rent than is suited to the circumstances of the families; and, secondly, a want, due in most cases to the impossibility, of an adequate pastoral superintendence. The number of people who should go to a place of worship, yet go nowhere, does not indicate the number, be it great or small, of sittings which have been provided, or the amount of good that in this way has been done for the families. But it distinctly indicates, what alone is of importance to our object,

the amount of good that has been left undone; and which, we add, will never be accomplished while the two causes now specified remain in operation. In other words, we shall never make head against the accumulating profligacy and irreligion of our cities, but with seat-rents low enough for the admission of the working classes; and with parishes small enough to allow a thorough visitation of each assigned locality by the minister and his coadjutors in the eldership, whose frequent assiduities may at length earn for them a moral ascendancy over the now alienated families—being, on the one hand, the very facilities which it is the great design of an establishment to provide; and, on the other, the very forces which a territorial establishment alone can bring to bear upon them. These household surveys form the best weapons by which to fight the question of a religious establishment, and to carry it. They, in the first instance, give now ample demonstration of the impotency of the voluntary system, which, after having put forth its unfettered energies for several generations, has left in every town of greatly increased population the vast majority of the working classes unprovided for. Let us hope that afterwards, they will, in consequence of our well-filled plebeian churches, these unfailing accompaniments of our well-cultivated districts, give alike ample demonstration of the efficiency of an Establishment.

We have already said, that, by our scheme of Church Extension, the work is partitioned between the church or country, and the Government—the

former party providing the fabrics; the latter solicited, and we hope at length prevailed upon, to grant an endowment for the maintenance of the clergymen. There is a disposition, we fear too prevalent, on the part even of the Church's best friends, to do nothing for her extension until they see what Government is to do. This, we hold, both in respect of principle and of sound policy, to be a sad inversion of the right process. At this rate it were altogether at the decision of any Government, however careless or contemptuous of religion it might be, whether the measures of the Church for advancing the kingdom and the gospel of Jesus Christ, should be permitted to go forward or have an arrest laid upon them. Hers is the sacred, the paramount duty, and no earthly power can cancel it, to preach the gospel to every creature, or to be instant, in season and out of season, that the means should be provided of so preaching it. This is the undoubted principle of the question; and as it will ever be found in the long-run, that sound principle and sound policy are at one, so in regard to the present case, we can have no doubt, that if the Church, in the first instance, will do all they can, Government in the second will do all they ought. Every new erection is *pro tanto* a contribution to the great object; and we repeat that the multiplication of these will prove the patent way to the endowment of them. If the Church will but do what she might, the cause must gather in strength and in public support every day, and, in the momentum of its progress, will carry the general mind of society, and

with this will carry the government, then relieved of perplexity, along with it. Let us even hope that the enemies of the Church will abate of their virulence; nor can we look upon the approximations that are now making without reading in them the symptoms of that great consummation when men who are now at one in their theology, or at one in their doctrine, will become one in communion and in spirit also. Would to Heaven, that in the establishment of a universal concord, these warring elements were at length harmonized,—and that the church, comprehensive of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, were, under the fostering countenance of a Christian and paternal Government which cared for these things, enabled to give of her lessons to the poorest of the land, and so to deal forth the bread of life to all the population.

But, it is easier to calculate the way of a planet in the firmament, than of a particle of water when borne downward in a running stream, or set adrift among the waves and currents of the restless ocean. This arises from the greater complexity as well as uncertainty of the forces which are concerned in the one movement than in the other; and it is of importance to remark, that, in attempting to calculate the events and the movements which take place in the moral world, we feel ourselves more placed among the difficulties of the former than of the latter investigation, owing to the innumerable and unseen forces which operate throughout the mass of human society. This is nowhere so forcibly exemplified as in the busy

metropolis, that awful vortex, where the passions and the prejudices, and the various partizanships of a whole empire are concentred, and form into an eddying whirl in which alike both rulers and subjects seem as if borne helplessly along. Nothing can be fancied more baffling to all human prescience than the future and final results of this mighty agitation—this conflict of many men and many minds, with the countless diversity of views and interests and feelings by which they are actuated. But it should at once humble and comfort us to recollect that, while so little can be foreseen by man, all is foreseen and directed by God—whose promise and whose prophecy it is, that the indestructible Church of Christ, like the ark borne aloft in safety and triumph among the waters of the deluge, will survive all the storms which might be raised for its overthrow. But the prophecies which have come down to us from Heaven do not supersede, they ought to guide and to stimulate, the prayers which ascend to it from earth. There are difficulties which no human wisdom can surmount; but there are none from which we might not find a refuge in the confidence and in the exercises of piety. He who is Governor among the nations—He who stilleth the tumults of the people—He in whose hand the heart of the king is as rivers of water, and He turneth it whithersoever He will—He who reigns paramount in the moral as in the material universe—can, in virtue of His sovereign command over the springs of a mechanism to us inscrutable, make all things work together for good to those who love and who trust in Him.

In the first year of Church Extension in Scotland, or from May 1834, to May 1835, the sums raised both local and general exceeded £60,000. In the second year the revenue fell to about £32,000. This did not discourage us, for we counted on the effect that might arise from the subsidence of novelty. And at all events, our hopes could not fail to be recovered by the result of the third year, which enabled us to report to the Assembly of 1837, an income for the preceding twelvemonth of £59,311. 6s.; and a total subscription of £159,997. 0s. 5½d. from the commencement of the scheme.

This statement of facts ought to silence the contemptuous imputation that has sometimes been preferred against us, as if ours too were one of this age's passing novelties—a fond and sanguine dream of enthusiasm—one of those magical illusions which charm the eye of the public for a season, but at length would, at the bidding of wise and sober experience, be consigned, with the other splendid deceits which have gone before it, to its own place in the land of Utopia. If this, indeed, be a vain enterprise, there are yet no symptoms of its speedy dissipation. Were it but one of the follies or the phantoms of an idle speculation, the men of our shrewd utilitarian age would by this time have found it out; nor would they continue to give, and to give so increasingly in support of it. A mere imagination would not have called forth such costly and substantial offerings; and to our minds it enhances this conclusion, when we look to the superiority of the local over the general contributions in support of our cause. It is not to a

magnificent and high sounding generality that our countrymen are doing all this homage. With the great majority of our subscribers it is not even the good of the nation which is present to their thoughts, but the good of their own little vicinity, all whose wants and whose statistics have been thoroughly ascertained. It is not for Church Extension in Scotland that their liberality is drawn out, but for a church in their own destitute village, or in the city district of some few plebeian streets, teeming with the families of a heretofore neglected population. In other words, it is not any seducing or sublime generalization which operates on the fancies of these men; it is a near and besetting reality at their very doors, which has operated so powerfully on their senses; and what they give is given under the impression of a practical acknowledged specific and home-felt necessity, that forces itself on their distinct and daily observation. It is true that our cause has now attained a national magnitude, and earned a place for itself in the councils and in the deliberations of the empire. But this result universal has only been come at, first by a laborious verification, and then by a summation of particulars. If we now carry along with us the voice of the kingdom, it is the fruit of anterior and hard-won achievements, done separately and in detail, in so many of our parishes. The philanthropy for which we plead is based on materials as solid as is the experimental philosophy of modern times. We have not descended from any hypothetical or *a priori* altitude, and then gone forth with a detail of marvels among the

people; but we have collected the findings of the people from all quarters of the land, and, reducing these to one summary expression, we can now tell the legislature, of a nation's wants and a nation's prayers—not the utterance of a hasty excogitation, but of a patient progressive and piece-meal experience. Ours is not the enterprise of rash and romantic projectors, but throughout of firm staple, and accredited by the substantial testimonies, and still more by the substantial offerings of a Christian public, it holds no common quality with the visions of an extravagant imagination; nor does it seek being indebted for one footstep of its progress, either to the impulse of a popular mania, or to the jugglery of a name.

But here a question may be interposed. We draw on the benevolence of the public for the erection of these churches. Why not draw on the same benevolence for the endowment of them also? Why obtrude on government an application for the latter object, any more than for the former? We have appealed to the generosity of individuals for one of these objects; why not make an appeal to them for both, or press on our rulers that Extension of the Church, which ought to be provided for in all its parts, by the free-will offerings of the good and the wealthy within its own bosom?

To this we reply, *First*, that it is in defect of the aid of Government on whom the obligation lies of providing all which is necessary for the Christian instruction of the people, that we now call for the contributions of private individuals—*Secondly*, that, even though individual benevolence could achieve

the whole, the necessary independence of the clergyman might be impaired, were his support to be devolved upon this quarter—*Thirdly*, but that there is a limit to the efforts of Christian philanthropy, hitherto far short of even a very sensible fraction of what is requisite for the thorough accomplishment of the object,—and, *Fourthly*, that in admitting the charities of the well-disposed to a share in this great work, we select the object which makes these far more prolific and available, when we propose for them the erection of new churches rather than their endowment; for here lies the distinction between the two cases—between the erection of new churches for which we are now soliciting their aid, and the endowment of them, for which we make application to the Government. It is a great and grievous miscalculation, that, because the erection of churches may be accomplished by the free-will offerings of private liberality, these should also suffice for the endowment of them. There is an entire disparity between these two objects, which if attended to, will explain how it is, that, while the united generosities of a neighbourhood may achieve the one, they should utterly fall short of the other. In the case of a building, there is speedily realized a full and definite and satisfactory return for the sums which have been raised. There is the whole money's worth for the whole money given—a something which at once pleases the eye, and interests the fancy, and presents an adequate result to the mind, in a visible product of tasteful and stately architecture, standing forth in the character of a public good, and digni-

fying or giving additional importance to the locality within which it has been reared. There are no such influences at play to stimulate the subscription for an endowment. We cannot in this way build up a capital for an annual interest as the only immediate return; and still less can we secure (though by one great impulse we may have succeeded in raising the church) by a repetition of impulses, the regular payment of an adequate yearly allowance for the clergyman—difficult, as it is ever found, so to sustain the zeal of subscribers; and naturally averse, as all people are, to an obligation that might continue during their lives, and might descend as a burden to their children. It is here that we solicit the helping hand of the State; and entreat of our rulers that they will provide an income for those functionaries whose office it is to preach the gospel to the poor, and be the moral guardians of the families in those districts which are respectively assigned to them. And, while it is our unalterable persuasion, that a sacred duty lies on a Christian government to provide for the religious instruction of the people, we cannot forbear also to refer to the fact, that churches for the mass of the community, and comprehensive of all classes, have never been adequately provided in any land, but on the strength of an endowment from without: and, we have to add, that should Government withhold this important aid from us, we have the melancholy prospect before us, that many of the new churches already raised will in a great measure fail in accomplishing the particular object in view; and that very many of the moral

wastes on which we have not yet entered, both in our crowded cities and remote country parishes, must be left without an effort to reclaim them.

For these several functions of private individuals on the one hand, and of Government on the other —for the method of apportioning the good work between them—and that often by the erection of a church by the former, and the endowment of it by the latter, we beg to adduce the examples, both of Scotland and England, which will abundantly vindicate our present doings, and more especially the present aim of the Assembly to provide the erection of new churches by the liberality of the people, and the endowment of them by the State. It will be found on a diligent study of what has been done in other days, that there is a very remarkable consonancy between the Church Extension Scheme on the one hand, and on the other, the spirit and views of the legislation that is to be met with on the subject, in the statute books both of Scotland and England; and also the practice of these two countries in former times, when the deficiency of either establishment had to be provided for. Though the erection as well as the endowment of all the parishes as they subsisted in Scotland three years ago, has been happily legalized; yet in many of the parishes when originally constituted, we find that the first church was built by the parishioners, and the endowment of it provided by the State. For in considering the history of the changes that have taken place in parochial establishments, we shall perceive that almost invariably, the first of the objects above enumerated,

to wit, the erection of new places of worship, has been accomplished by the people themselves belonging to the parishes; and that the second requisite of an ecclesiastical establishment, the endowment of the minister, has generally fallen to the public or to the State to make good. It will be found indeed on an examination of the statutes, both those relating to Scotland exclusively, and those relating to England and Wales, "that the constitutional means for supplying the defect have been considered to be a parliamentary grant of public money in aid of the voluntary contributions of individuals; that in former times these contributions have only been expected from persons interested in or connected with the particular district or parish where the want was felt; and that the kind of assistance very frequently given by individuals in this end of the island, has been the erection of the fabric of the church, leaving the endowment to be otherwise provided for."

In every complex question, there is great danger of being hurried or betrayed into a wrong judgment, and that by mere inadvertency to some one or other of the various elements which enter into the composition of it. And to no subject is this observation more applicable, than to the Extension of a National or Established Church; and that whether it be argued as a question of abstract reasoning, or it be looked to in the actual history of those steps and expedients by which it is carried forward.

The great argument on the side of a legal or national provision for the Christian education of

the people, is, that, if left to their own spontaneous movements, they will neither erect a sufficient number of churches, nor provide the maintenance of a sufficient number of clergymen for themselves. Now, what applies to a whole people before that a religious establishment has begun, applies also to a part of the people, even that part which is left without the limits of an inadequate establishment, or of one too small to overtake all the families of the land. This surplus or out-field population will hold forth as ample a proof for the impotency of the Voluntary system, as did the whole of the original population, before that a National Church was provided for them. They will neither provide enough of places of worship, nor support enough of Christian ministers to serve in them; and so present a fearful mass of irreligion and crime to the view of observers. The argument for the extension of the National Church in behalf of these, is identical with the argument for the establishment of such a Church at all; and those professed friends of the Church of Scotland, who yet are hostile to its extension, will be put, we should imagine, to no small difficulty, if ever called upon to vindicate the existence of it.

It is well known that acting as an organ of the public liberality, we have only yet undertaken to provide for one object of a National Establishment. They have given such assistance as they could afford towards the erection of places of worship; but in no instance have they contributed to the maintenance of the clergyman. Had they been fully able to overtake both, then, without aid or

co-operation from any other quarter, might they have looked forward to the time, when, by the contributions of the benevolent alone, the Church might have been adequately extended, so as to meet the exigencies of all our population. But we only attempt a fraction of the work; and the consequence is, that we can only find our way to a fraction of the now unprovided families. Had we been able to do all, we might by this time have held forth the gospel to all, without money and without price. But we have only lessened somewhat the money and the price which worshippers must pay for the services of religion. We may have opened the gate of ordinances to poorer than before, but we have not yet reached the poorest of the poor; and, long before our destitution is fully overtaken, we, if obliged to confine our efforts to the requisite architecture alone, must at last be arrested at a barrier beyond which we cannot penetrate.

We have never affirmed the utter powerlessness of the Voluntary principle, and more especially when it assumes the form of voluntary liberality. There was room allowed, nay even great room and encouragement given to it under the Jewish dispensation, when, over and above the levies and the tithes, the people added their free-will offerings. And in our modern day, we are not aware of any Established Church within the limits of Christendom, that has altogether rejected this aid; as in Roman Catholic countries, notwithstanding the greater sufficiency in general of their endowments; and even in the Church of England, where, in the shape of

fees and offerings to their clergymen, and of parish rates for the maintenance and tasteful adornment of their churches, the spontaneous generosity of the contributors frequently goes beyond the strict necessity of the legal ordination. Perhaps in Scotland there has been a greater, a more sensitive repugnance felt to this mixture of the voluntary with the established and the legal, than in any other land. Yet we must not forget the rock from whence we have been hewn, or shut our eyes to the undeniable historical truth, that to voluntary liberality the Protestant Church of Scotland owes its existence. It is true that the fathers of our glorious emancipation from Popery, never lost sight of the Church's patrimonial endowments, or ceased to reclaim against the violence and injustice of those nobles, by whose unprincipled rapacity it was that they were withheld for years from their rightful object, the Christian education of our families. Yet for the achievement of this great end, for the restoration of the property and rights of the Church, or, which is tantamount to this, for the restoration of the dearest rights and interests of the people, they disdained not the aid of voluntary liberality, which, in their hands, proved the great instrument of moral compulsion, by which, not to set aside a religious Establishment, but by which to secure and carry one. The narrow controversialists of the present day, who have only space in their understandings for half a subject, would make the one of these elements utterly destructive of the other—would, on the one hand, refuse to take one footstep of the voluntary movement, be

cause not in the style and not comporting with the dignity of a regular and endowed church; or, on the other hand, because our forefathers laboured, and with such signal effect, to recover the establishment of a National Church, and by means of spontaneous liberality, we their posterity should, they think, make their means our end, and contrive to do without an Establishment altogether. It is fortunate for the moral history of Scotland, that the men of other days could both combine and could discriminate. They knew that what was not fit for a landing-place, might yet be fit for a stepping-stone; and so Knox and his followers, when bereft of the legal provision, threw themselves on the liberalities of the people: and it was the powerful voice of their numerous and faithful congregations, under the guidance and intelligence of their pastors, which forced from the reluctant government of that period at least a partial restoration of the Church's rifled patrimony. It is our part to unite the zeal with the wisdom of these men, that the Church, which to them owes its existence, may from us receive that extension which, disguise it as we may, has now become indispensable for the safe transmission of it into the hands of our children's children.*

It will be seen, that with our new churches we

* We read in Dr M'Crie's Life of Andrew Melville, that at a meeting in Dunfermline, David Ferguson, the oldest minister of the church, rose and gave an account of the first planting of the Reformed Church in Scotland. "He was one of six individuals, he said, who engaged in that work, when the name of stipend was unknown, when they had to encounter the united opposition of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and could scarcely reckon

have reached a good way farther down among the destitute of our people than they ever did, or possibly could have done, by means of the old chapels. It has happened with us according to a universal law in Political Economy. Along with a cheapening of the goods, there has been a widening of the market. We have found our way to poorer customers than before; but unless the goods be still further cheapened, by what in commerce is termed a bounty, and in Christianity is termed an endowment, we shall inevitably stop short, before we can find our way to the great mass and majority of the unprovided population. Otherwise, it is in vain to erect fabrics in behalf of those, who either will not or cannot provide a scanty maintenance for the clergymen who might fill them. It is thus that the further we proceed in our operations, we come into view of a destitution and a helplessness still more aggravated than any that we have had yet to deal with. We have traversed a larger space than we could have imagined to be at all practicable, in the brief period of about five years from the commencement of our proceedings; but there is a far larger ulterior space, which remains to be entered, and on the greater part of which we shall never be able to plant a single footstep without help for the maintenance of the clergyman, as well as help for the erection of a sacred edifice, in which he might deal forth the bread of life, among a people now perishing for lack of knowledge. There-

on the countenance and support of any person of note and worldly estimation; yet they firmly and fearlessly persevered, and Providence crowned their labours with success." Vol. ii. pp. 59, 60.

fore it is, that at every new footstep of our progress, the appeals for aid which we cannot answer become more frequent and more painfully impressive than before. The numerous urgencies on all hands to which we are exposed, experimentally tell the need of a Religious Establishment, each new call louder than before, and carrying in it a fresh demonstration of the impotency of Voluntaryism.

Meanwhile, it is satisfactory to believe, that the highway to our ultimate success, is just a perseverance on the part of the Church in the way that they begun and have continued hitherto. As yet we have proceeded, not on the maxim that the public should do all, neither on the maxim that the Government must do all; but we have all along attempted a composition of both. As in the best days of the Old Testament; and we may add as in the times when piety most flourished in the Church of Scotland, and that too while there was the greatest deficiency both of places of worship and of ministers in the land—the want, we know on the clearest historical demonstration, was repaired, not from one or other of these sources exclusively, but from the benevolence of individuals conjoined with a bounty from the state. And at this moment it must be perfectly obvious, that thes two, instead of conflicting are conspiring forces It is to the magnitude of our previous efforts, that we owe all our present influence with public and parliamentary men on this great question. It is the number of our New Churches, as demonstrative of the sacrifices made to raise them, which affords the most authentic test and exhibition, both of the

destitution under which we labour, and of our desire to have it removed. Now, these are the very elements which operate with greatest effect on the rulers of a free nation; or, in other words, it is our architecture that will prove the stepping-stone to our endowments—it is through the medium of the country that the Government will be carried.

Nothing, therefore, could be imagined that would prove more ruinous to our great enterprise, than to suspend all further operations, till we see what Government were to do for us. If we suspend our operations, Government will infallibly suspend their resolutions in our favour. Though it be the undoubted duty of Government to provide for the religious education of the people, there is too much reason to fear, that no Administration will propose a grant for the endowment of our New Churches, without a strong and previously expressed desire for such a measure on the part of the community at large. Now, the number of these Churches forms the best criterion, by which to estimate both the strength and the prevalence of this desire. In proportion as our undertaking for New Churches approaches to a magnitude that is national, will our demand for a provision to their new clergy have in it the character and force of a national cry. In very proportion that we multiply our erections in the country, shall we multiply our friends and our votes in the parliament. It is thus that each additional fabric becomes an additional guarantee for our ultimate success. As with the first establishment, so in fact with the subsequent extension of all National Churches. It was the

number of congregations spread over the whole territory, which led to the one; and it is the number of congregations, more or less matured, spread over the surplus or unprovided territory, which forms the likeliest step to the accomplishment of the other also.

The following is a statement of the leading facts of Church Extension during the last five years:—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In 1835 there were reported | 62 | churches, and | £65,626 | 1 | 11¾ |
| — 1836 | 26 | ditto | 32,359 | 12 | 5¾ |
| — 1837 | 67 | ditto | 59,311 | 6 | 0 |
| — 1838 | 32 | ditto | 48,683 | 1 | 4¾ |
| And now in 1839 we announce | 14 | ditto | 25,959 | 14 | 9¾ |
| Making in all | 201 | churches, and | £231,939 | 16 | 8 |

They who know the *rationale* of our process, will know how to interpret the fact of the declension which has taken place last year, and understand it as a result which ought to have been looked for, first, without any abatement, but rather an increase in the urgency of the demand for more churches; and, secondly, without any abatement, but an increase, too, in the interest felt by all classes of society in Scotland, for the furtherance and final accomplishment of our great cause.

First, there is no abatement, but the contrary, in the urgency of the demand. By the very moderate computation of the royal commissioners, there were 40,000 individuals, who ought to be church-goers, within the limits of the presbytery of Edinburgh, unprovided with the means of religious instruction; and for these nine new churches have been or are to be erected, leaving more than thirty congregations which still remain to be gathered from destitute and desert places in and about the metropolis

of Scotland. By the computation of the same honourable body, alike moderate, for certainly as much within the truth as the former, there are upwards of 60,000 human beings in Glasgow living in the habit of estrangement from the ordinances of religion, and for whom only fifteen new churches have yet been overtaken; so that in that city and neighbourhood, with a population increasing at the fearful rate of 8000 in the year, there still remain materials for no less than fifty additional congregations. We will not affirm that there is the same proportional deficiency all over Scotland; but we state it as our confident persuasion, that though much has been already done, it does not amount to one-half of what is still undone, or in other words, we shall not complete our part of the undertaking, which is the mere architecture of Church extension, without a doubly greater amount of liberality than has yet been expended, and that on edifices alone.

But it is not of the mass of this remaining destitution that we have alone to speak. It is of the degree and quality of the destitution, as being of a far more helpless and aggravated character than any which we have yet had to encounter. By every step in advance, or at every fresh descent that we make on the churchless territory of Scotland, we come into engagement with poorer and more wretched localities than before. We have already traversed the whole of that practicable border, or, by another mode of conceiving it, have already made full penetration through that uppermost layer of the heathenism of our land, in which the people, with the moderate aid of 25 per cent.,

have managed to make out the remaining expense, and complete the building of places of worship for themselves. But we have now come into communication with the people next in order on the scale of increasing poverty, and not only destitute, but friendless, from whom we have little or nothing to look for in the sufficiency of their own resources, and who, less favoured than many of their neighbours, have no wealthy and generous supporters of what is good connected with them, either by residence or property, who might patronize their local subscription, and help it forward by their munificence, to the state in which it might be presented for the stated allowances of the General Committee. They cannot afford so much as 75 per cent. for the building of a church, and we cannot afford more than 25 per cent. to carry them onward in this undertaking; and so, unless enabled to give more liberally than at that rate which hitherto has kept us in a state of perpetual exhaustion, they and we must for ever abide at an impracticable distance from each other; and so, again, at the very time that the calls of destitution have become more urgent and imploring, we are removed by a wider gulf of separation from the possibility of relieving it. It is, indeed, a most striking experimental verification of every doctrine which we have advocated on the necessity of a provision *ab extra*, ere the people of any land can be adequately supplied with the ministrations of the gospel; or, in other words, on the good of a National Establishment to overspread, both with churches and schools, the whole extent of that territory which, apart from this, and with

all the powers both of Voluntaryism within and of Voluntaryism without, has never yet been overtaken. If we fail in our practical object, we shall, at least have the melancholy satisfaction of reading our own lesson on the moral waste which lies before us, in more vivid and discernible characters than ever; and, if brought to a dead stand, with neither the increased liberality of the Christian public, nor the helping hand of Government to carry us forward, this very result, while the disappointment of all our hopes, will be to us the confirmation of all our principles.

But, secondly, and notwithstanding the comparatively smaller progress made last year, both in our funds and our churches, we have the satisfaction of being able to demonstrate, that, as this does not proceed from any abatement in the demand, or in the felt necessity for more places of worship, so neither does it proceed from any abatement of zeal, or exertion on the part of the Christian public, for the advancement of this great cause. There might have been an apparent pause, and that, too, at the very moment when the destitution first came into sight, of a more clamant and helpless description than heretofore we had been in the habit of relieving,—just as the cry of distress, while it arouses the painfullest sympathy of all its hearers, might, at the same time, chill them into inaction, when it either betokens so extreme a wretchedness, or seems to issue from a quarter so inaccessible, as to be beyond the reach of its possible alleviation. Fortunately, in the course of last year, we have been enabled to apply a discriminating test, by

which to ascertain whether the decline of our prosperity arose from the sensibility in our favour becoming extinct, or from that sensibility being only in abeyance, till some practicable opening was presented for the development of whatever force or feeling might yet remain to it. On revealing the difficulties of our scheme to him who, from the first, has been its most munificent supporter, Mr William Campbell of Glasgow, practised in business, and with a sagacity in devising liberal things only equalled by the open-heartedness which prompts and actuates him onwards to the noblest sacrifices, and leaves us at a loss whether most to admire the largeness of his benefactions or the largeness of his views,—this truly patriotic friend of the Church of Scotland has suggested a plan which, now that it has been put, though as yet very partially, into operation, bids fair, if only prosecuted with sufficient energy, to bring our enterprise into its desired haven. The proposal is, "to contribute at the rate of £1 or more for each of the 100 new churches, not begun to be built previous to the publication of the Assembly's Church Extension Report of 1838; or for any smaller number of new churches which subscribers may choose to fix upon." This proposal has been adopted, and, with certain explanations, has been presented under the sanction of their recommendation to the public at large. It has been extensively circulated throughout the Church, and, though not one-tenth of the exertion has yet been made which might easily, and with a little co-operation in various parts of the country, be put

forth, and that most beneficially and productively, in behalf of this Supplementary Fund, it has met with so ready an approval in every quarter where it has yet been prosecuted, that, in the shape of contributions to this scheme, we can report the addition of no less than £27,000 to the other revenue for Church Extension in Scotland. This added to the sums formerly exhibited, makes out the total revenue of last year to be £52,959, 14s. 9¾d., and the grand total of revenue since the commencement of the scheme to be £258,939, 16s. 8d. From this deduct an overstatement of £7500 assigned by the Report of a former year to the building of a new Gaelic church in Glasgow, on the mistaken supposition that it was an *additional* church, and there remains for the whole revenue of five years the sum of £251,439, 16s. 8d.

This princely offering to our cause, which we have no doubt might, with a certain degree of countenance, and a certain contribution of agency from the church's friends, be easily tripled in the course of a few months, not only opens a patent way for the fulfilment of our part of the undertaking, which is the erection of all the necessary fabrics, but affords so impressive a demonstration of the resolute and unquelled spirit of Church Extension in Scotland, as must tell most efficiently on the mind of parliament in our favour. There is a peculiar character in the offerings to the Supplementary Fund, which does not belong to the contributions which have been received hitherto. These were chiefly rendered to us in the shape of local subscriptions, having for their object the pal-

pable or immediate good of one's own family or one's own neighbourhood, and meeting with its almost present reward in the speedy ascent of a graceful structure near at hand, and within the daily observation of his senses. But the object of the Supplementary Fund is general and indiscriminate for the whole of Scotland, and its benefits will principally be felt in those remote and destitute localities which have hitherto escaped the eye of observation. In other words, the donors of these magnificent sums have cast them into our treasury, not under the impulse of any special affection, but in obedience, let us hope, to the calm and unimpassioned dictate of Christian charity, and holding no common quality whatever with the influences either of sense or of selfishness. The thing has been done by the force of an enduring principle, not of a fickle or a fugitive emotion; and we confess our more steadfast assurance than heretofore in the perpetuity of our great undertaking, and at length its prosperous consummation, when, apart from the operation of every partial or accidental stimulus, apart from the charm of any local distinction or local benefit, we behold so noble a response on the part of the people of Scotland to the Catholic lesson of doing good unto all men—a lesson eternal and unchangeable as the gospel itself, and so long as the unction of the Holy One is in the midst of us, that anointing which remaineth with the people of God, a lesson which can never be forgotten, and the felt authority of which will never die.

We are quite sensible, that, while thus expa-

tiating on the bright prosperity of these doings, and on the confidence we feel in the sufficiency of public benevolence, for the erection of all our churches, we stand exposed to the question,—Why not trust to the same benevolence for the endowment of them also? and have even been reproached for the impolicy of gathering and exhibiting such proofs of the efficacy of the Voluntary principle, as might absolve the Government from all farther part or concern in the undertaking, and justify our rulers for the determination on which they have acted from the commencement of our present undertaking, of leaving us to ourselves. This objection can only be entertained by such as have had no intimate experience, and expended little or no reflection on the subject. Experimentally, we can raise money for the fabrics,—we cannot raise it for aught like a secure or permanent endowment. Among the two hundred belonging to Church Extension, we have only succeeded in obtaining the endowment of about four or five; and that, save in one, or at most, in two instances, not a complete, but a partial maintenance for the clergyman. And this actual finding of human nature in the present day is in beautiful accordance with the facts of history, both sacred and secular, in past times,—with the rearing of the tabernacle, and the repairs of the temple, and the erection of synagogues, being done by the free-will offerings of the people, and yet a large and liberal provision for their ecclesiastics, coeval with the first settlement of the Hebrew nation in the land of Canaan, —more recently with the disjunction of parishes

both in England and Scotland, which, as admirably set forth by Mr Monypenny, was carried into effect by the erection of a church on the part of the parishioners, by the endowment of it on the part of the State. The sound practical view of the matter is this: Our architecture, so far from acting as a repellent, will be the very instrument in our hands by which to invite and secure the endowment we are seeking for. They will be the conductors by which to bring down this virtue or this boon from the upper regions of our political hemisphere; and if only enough multiplied on the platform of the community below, their united force will by a moral law as surely evoke this dispensation from the high court of Parliament, as by a physical law a church spire, when sufficiently raised above the earth, can effectuate the discharge of electricity from the heavens. Our places of worship, these undoubted signals both of a felt necessity and of an urgent desire on the part of the constituencies of Scotland, will at length command, first the notice, and then the support of our Scottish representatives. We may have had misgivings as to the likelihood of such a consummation, when moving every year through a medium of greater density and resistance, we had, because of the impediment already explained, to report both a lessening revenue and a lessening number of additional settlements on that dreary field of irreligion and ignorance which has not yet been one-third overtaken. But now that by a plan so felicitous in the conception, and so practicable in the execution of it, this impediment has at length been cleared

away; and the Supplementary Fund, which has already reached, and that on the strength of a few isolated efforts, the sum of £27,000, but capable of being raised, we confidently affirm, by dint of a little more co-operation, to £100,000, in the course of the following year, will then be available for the erection of churches in districts which have as yet been helplessly beyond the reach of your Committee,—A demonstration so magnificent as this, such a resolute and unquelled spirit of Christian philanthropy, rising superior to difficulties, and for the achievement of a conquest over them, breaking forth into noble acts and sacrifices of generosity all over the land,—before a principle so commanding in itself, and leading to a result so truly patriotic as that of a universal Christian education, any rulers, and of whatever party or denomination in the state, must finally give way, and when at length ashamed of all further resistance, through the medium of the country embarked in a cause so glorious, and fully resolved on its accomplishment, the Government will be carried

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No. I.

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# THE RIGHT

# ECCLESIASTICAL ECONOMY

OF

# A LARGE TOWN.

PRO
PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL

ON THE

# RIGHT ECCLESIASTICAL ECONOMY

OF

# A LARGE TOWN.

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1. The duties of a clergyman are either *ministerial* or *pastoral.* We shall proceed on this division throughout the following pages—only employing other terms for designating the two separate branches of it, which, though not fully, nor with perfect accuracy, corresponding to the terms which we have just used, are more convenient for the purposes of our argument. We shall therefore speak not of the ministerial and pastoral, but of the *pulpit* and *household* duties of a clergyman.

2. The first step in the analysis of our subject, is to view the former class of duties in a state of entire separation from the other. We may conceive of our clergymen that they preach, but do nothing more, at least ecclesiastically do nothing more—in which case we might have pulpit ministrations in all forms and varieties of excellence, but with an utter want of household ministrations. And this, so far from a hypothetical imagination, comes per-

haps the nearest, or, at least, approximates very much to the way in which matters are actually conducted in many of our large towns, which should make it all the more interesting to trace or to assign the effect on the state and habit of their aggregate populations.

3. In the first place, preaching, the proclamation of the Gospel,* is the great appointed mean for turning men into Christians. Were I asked to determine and declare the chief place of a minister's usefulness, in spite of all my value for household and parochial services, I should still say it was the pulpit. To the preparation of his Sabbath discourses, all his other duties and the arrangements of his time ought to be made subservient. This is his main work; and to whatever extent he may have succeeded on the Sunday in subduing the reason and the consciences of his people under him, to that extent will he have acquired a mastery which shall last him through the week, will he have earned the confidence and respect of one having authority. It is not the mere difference of station alone which explains the difference in point of command and moral sovereignty among the families, between a revered parish clergyman on the one hand, and the parish missionary, however faithful and friendly and devoted, his assiduities may have been, on the other. It may be difficult to explain; but certain it is, that the man whom we hear habitually in public on the solemn seventh day, with a felt response in our own heart, and, amid the sympathies of an impressed and listening congre-

* Το κηρυγμα του λογου.

gation, bears in his person a weight and an ascendancy which no other can attain to; and it gives to his personal attentions a tenfold influence over that of other men. However high, then, the value which may be assigned to week-day ministrations, it all the more emphatically tells in favour of Sabbath ministrations—seeing that they are the latter which impart so much of their strength and efficacy to the former. But the virtue is reciprocal; for if the one act with prosperous operation and effect upon the other, certain it is that the other re-acts most beneficially and powerfully back again.

4. Now, in our large towns, we have the ministerial service without the pastoral; and we all know what a loose and precarious connexion between ministers and people this has given rise to. It forms a most imperfect spiritual husbandry—just as much so as if in natural husbandry the whole of the agriculture were confined to the mere casting of the seed upon the ground, without any preparation of the soil before, without any inquiry or care about the progress of the vegetation afterwards, although the rains of heaven, which easily might have been drained off, should destroy the rising crop, or the fowls of the air, which might have been easily scared away, should devour it. The scanty and uncertain produce from such mere scatterings as these, will represent the scanty and uncertain produce of all our city sermons. There has been little or no preparation of the soil for them beforehand, in a rising generation trained by religious schooling, or taught in the bosom of well-

ordered families; and no surveillance, whether by the pastor or his associates, afterwards, as in those good old days when it was not thought enough that ministers should preach, but that elders should "seek the fruit of it among the people,"—armed with authority enough to put down those moral nuisances which multiply now without check and without control on every side of us. There is a wide, and, under the present system of things, an impracticable gulf of separation between the clergyman and the families of his territorial charge; and even should his church, Sabbath after Sabbath, be filled to an overflow by people not his own, he, on the one hand, can take no adequate weekly cognizance of them—nor, on the other, can he do aught to stem or make head against that practical heathenism, which is taking deeper root, and every year becoming more inveterate and hopeless within the limits of his own peculiar vineyard. Let the patronage be as righteous as it may, there is not a city-population that will not rapidly degenerate under the regimen of well-served pulpits and ill-served parishes. The word that is sounded forth may be carried far and wide, as by the four winds of heaven, and even descending here and there upon individual consciences, may cause that the town shall not be spread, but, if I may use the expression, be spotted with Christianity; just as in savage islands, where, with the distribution, such as it is, of the vegetable family under the random play and operation of nature's elements, still we might behold occasional tufts of richest luxuriance, or surpassing loveliness and verdure—

yet the island after all is a howling desert; the town after all is a moral wilderness.

5. So much for the pulpit without the household duties of the clergyman. But these household duties admit of a most important subdivision, or rather might be classified into two species or modifications, the distinction between which we should like fully and clearly to impress on the understandings of our readers. It is a distinction big with principle and big with effect; and could we only succeed in causing it to be thoroughly appreciated, we should not despair of overcoming the fearful inertness of the public mind to the fearful destitution of our city families. And there is no difficulty in comprehending the subject to which we now invite the notice of the community—once their thoughts were fairly engaged in it. Our only barrier (*so obstinate, however, as to be well nigh insuperable*) is the initial difficulty of gaining their attention to it; or of creating in their minds any interest about a matter which lies beyond the range of their habitual sympathies and habitual contemplations. Yet great as the difficulty is of fixing the public attention upon this theme, and discouraging as our experience has been of the exceeding obtuseness of men's minds to its worth and magnitude, the cause is vastly too important to be given up in despair. At all events, let us once more lift up a testimony; and its voice perchance may not be altogether the voice of one crying in a wilderness. The many, in all likelihood, may turn a deaf and disregardful ear away from it. But a few may listen, and if led to comprehend

the reason of our distempered ecclesiastical state, they will be led to perceive the remedy; and perhaps to press onward for the adoption of it. In this hope we recur again to the distinction we have just intimated. To our own mind, it has all the properties of a cipher in the way of explanation—serving to unlock, as it were, and unravel a secret which lay concealed among the intricacies of a mechanism that had not been previously studied or explored. The distinction we shall now state, though aware of its utter insignificance in the eyes of merely secular men—whether in the walks of business, or politics, or general science. It is a distinction between one kind of the clergyman's household duties and another; where, as in other examples of classification, each kind may be expressed by affixing the specific term which is peculiarly characteristic of itself to that generic term which denotes the common quality of both. The one species, then, comprehends the *household congregational;* the other the *household parochial* duties of the clergyman.

6. For an example of the household congregational, as distinct from the household parochial duties, we refer to the dissenting minister both in town and country. He has a congregation, but not a parish. His hearers lie scattered in all directions and at all distances, without any tie of juxtaposition either to him or among themselves. It is this which makes the week-day attentions of the minister peculiarly laborious, and must of necessity deduct from the amount of them. The household visits, the family examinations, the due attendance

on the sick the disconsolate and the dying, must be limited by the very amount of the locomotion that is necessary to perform them. And there can be little or no abridgment of this labour by the grouping of contiguous families into one common assemblage for one common and general address—as the established minister may do, whether in the lanes or alleys of a town, or in the hamlets of a country parish. From these various causes the household duties of the dissenting minister can seldom be fully or satisfactorily overtaken; and nothing so reduces one to inaction as the despairing sense of a task so oppressive and operose as to have become impracticable. When there exists an invincible barrier in the way of doing all that we would, it often discourages even from doing all that we can. And, accordingly, it has often been alleged of dissenters, that, with all the zeal and talent of their pulpit services, there exists a grievous defect in their household ministrations; a peculiarity, however, owing, we believe, to no defect of principle, but to the real difficulty of their position. And there are noble examples amongst them of unquenched and unconquerable energy, by which even this difficulty has been made head against—as by my venerable friend, Ebenezer Brown of Inverkeithing, whose unwearied assiduities for about half a century have done much to sustain the Christianity of his neighbourhood, and to keep alive the sense and the savour of what is good among its families. He perhaps is not fully aware how much more effectual his labours might have been, had they been concentrated on a given terri-

tory, every house of which he could have entered with the freedom and authority of a parish minister. One like unto him in devotedness and worth, one of the excellent ones of the earth, good Philip Henry, has left upon this subject a precious testimony. He had the advantage of Mr Brown, in that he had personal experience on both sides of the question; and when driven by the tyranny of the times to the outfields of nonconformity, he often sighed for the reinstatement of himself in a situation where he might again enjoy the benefits of "parish order." Without this order, it is little known how inadequate, how powerless, all the efforts of human strength and human wisdom must ever prove to the effect of leavening a population with Christianity. At the most it will be a sprinkling, not an infusion. There will be a few scattered particles of pure farina in the heap,—a family here and there in which the melodies of sacredness are heard, amidst a stupendous and ever-growing mass of profligacy and heathenism.

7. We have already considered the effect of pulpit duties by themselves, when unaccompanied with the household—let us now take the opportunity of considering the effect, when the household duties of the clergyman are performed by themselves, and to families who, from some cause or other, while they have the benefit of his week-day, have not, at the same time, the benefit of his Sabbath ministrations. Let us conceive (for we have very seldom an opportunity of observing it,) the case of a minister plying his daily rounds among the contiguous families of a parish, to very few if any, of whom he

preaches on the Sabbath. It is not in blame of the clergyman that we affirm such a case to be seldom realized; for, generally speaking, the circumstances under which he is placed preclude its possibility. He, in the first instance, preaches to very few of his parishioners; because, unfortunately, he has no parochial congregation to preach to. Like his brother of the dissent, his congregation, from causes to be afterwards explained, is made up of hearers from all parts, without regard either to distance or locality. He is in the worst possible circumstances for entering on the work of parochial cultivation, already burdened with a task, subject to the various difficulties that we have just insisted on; and, after all, as if to aggravate his sense of hopelessness and of exhaustion to the uttermost, found to be impracticable. We cannot imagine a worse preparation for entering with freshness and vigour on a new task, than to have expended one's strength, or to be still expending it, on an old one, that never can be fully or satisfactorily overtaken. And, accordingly, there are many Edinburgh ministers who have never attempted any systematic operation upon their parishes, and yet, notwithstanding, are among the hardest working men I know anywhere. Their time and strength throughout the week are absorbed in duties, although the duty of ministering from house to house be seldom or never one of them. The truth is, that, when the parish and the congregation are not coincident, the minister who gives himself to the performance of household duties at all, is under the strongest temptation to attempt the household congregational,

rather than the household parochial—to visit the man who is his hearer, though not his parishioner, rather than the man who is his parishioner, but not his hearer—the family, whose acquaintance he, through the means of his Sabbath ministrations, may be said to have already made, rather than the family whose acquaintance he has yet to make. It is the more inviting, and more natural movement, to enter upon an expectant household, where parents and children unite in one common recognition of the clergyman who addresses them every week from the pulpit, than to enter on a household of strangers, where there is no such recognition to prepare the way for him. And the influence which restrains him at the first, overhangs him ever afterwards; growing every year, in fact, as his engagements multiply, and his attachments become stronger to the members of his own congregation, and therefore detaining him with all the more hard and hopeless necessity from the inhabitants of his own parish, which, exiled from his attentions during the whole of his incumbency, remains a *terra incognita*, peopled by families of aliens.

8. Suppose, however, the clergyman to break his way through all these obstructions, and to resolve on a thorough territorial cultivation of his parish. He ought, in this case, to lay his account with the entire abandonment of his general, or extra-parochial hearers, upon week-days. But suppose, that, upon the principle of sacrificing the lesser duty to the greater, he commits this violence on his old habits and attachments, and gives himself forthwith to the busy cultivation of his own

parish families—not only making his regular yearly rounds amongst all the households, without the omission of one, save when they shut the door against him,* but holding himself in readiness to attend every funeral—to wait upon every dying bed—to seize upon each case of recovery from dangerous illness, as his golden opportunity for plying the conscience with lessons of seriousness—in every tenement which he enters to engage, as far as in him lay, the confidence and regard of children, taking the state of their education into his special cognizance and care—to be frequent at every seminary within his bounds, and by his presence there direct, and as much as possible, Christianize its scholarship—to have periodic meetings with the various agencies of his parish, whether they be elders, or deacons, or Sabbath teachers,—and, in short, to concentrate all his spare energies within that geographical vineyard, which he is henceforth to make the proper and exclusive field of all that labour, which, after the work of Sabbath preparation, and the hours or days of needful recreation or rest, he can possibly bestow upon it. We have no doubt, that, on these terms, a new minister, entering on a new-formed parish, disembarrassed, therefore, from a general congregation, and who

* On the strength of all our experience we affirm, that this would not happen in the proportion of any thing equal to one instance in the hundred. On the contrary, the whole of this ministerial progress, and more especially among the deep and densely peopled recesses of a plebeian parish, would be brightened at every footstep by the unbounded welcome and cordiality of the families. What a patent way is before us for a great and almost instant amelioration, if men would but open their eyes, and relax in the obstinacy of their prejudices!

had a church altogether to fill, would operate with prodigious effect on the families among whom he thus expatiated. But he who is a minister already, and who, instead of beginning *de novo*, merely changes the system of his operations, is in very different circumstances. His general congregation hangs like a mill-stone about him. He preaches to one set on the Sabbath; he visits another set through the week. It may be difficult to make an unprofessional reader comprehend the evil of such a disjunction. But so it is. Let the clergyman attempt, as he may, to ply in such a parish all the assiduities of a pastor—he is not their minister, and he is struck with impotency because of it. He goes among them bereft of all that sacredness and spiritual might, wherewith Sabbath associations, and these alone, can invest him. His visits will at all times be taken with perfect kindness; but they will want that certain unction and accompanying power, which no man can wield, save he who speaks with energy to their consciences from the pulpit, who baptizes their children, and at whose hands they receive the holy sacrament. His general congregation may be said to have divested him of all these elements of authority in his parish. His presence in their houses will at all times be welcome; but, wanting the full authority of religion, it will be tenfold less influential. Superficial and contemptuous men will ascribe the efficacy of that undoubted charm, which lies in the conjunction of the ministerial with the pastoral, to the mere influence of the priestly office over the *popular imagination*. But it is seated a great deal deeper

in our moral nature than this; and is in no way to be likened to one of the caprices or fleeting forms of a delusive superstition. It has a stable and unchangeable hold on what may be termed one of the fixtures of the human constitution. Its hold is upon the conscience; and he who, by his impressive demonstrations on the seventh day, hath achieved a conquest over this faculty in any of his hearers, hath subordinated to himself the whole man; and needs only superadd to the fidelity of his pulpit the friendliness of his household ministrations, that, by the united power of truth and charity, he may acquire over the hearts of his hearers the likeliest influence of any, that is ever to arise in an aggregate of human beings, for building up, whether in the crowded city, or in the remote and sequestered parish, a community of virtuous and well-ordered families.*

* The disadvantage under which household visits are performed among families who are not hearers, will at once explain and excuse the separation that has taken place, under the system of general congregations, between city clergymen and their respective parishes. The week-day exercises by the clergymen among those who hear him on the Sabbath, are so much more prosperous and satisfactory, than the same week-day exercises among those who do not hear him, that we are not to wonder at the preference given to the former; and, once this preference is acted on, once the minister embarks on a system of household ministrations among the members of an extra-parochial congregation, there is a limit both to time and strength, and any thing like a system of parochial assiduities becomes henceforth hopeless and impracticable.

I may here take the liberty of observing, that in Glasgow, my own congregation, with the exception of about a hundred hearers, was extra-parochial; that I nevertheless, in the performance of family and household work, gave the preference to my parish; that I had the distinct feeling, however, of the great disadvantage under which I laboured, in consequence of these parishioners not being my hearers also; that, to overcome this, as far as I could, a Sunday evening sermon was instituted for their special behoof;

9. Now conceive, of this bland, and beneficent, and withal powerfully moral influence, that, instead of being dissipated and lost, by its being scattered into shreds and insensible fragments over the whole city and neighbourhood, it is recalled and concentrated over the contiguous households of one definite and manageable portion of it. I wish that I could adequately impress on the mind even of the considerate reader, (the careless reader is out of the question,) the mighty moral change that hinges on this merely external and mechanical one —this new marshalling, as it were, of our ecclesiastical forces—this simple amendment in the tactics and disposition of our city clergymen. But I ought not to speak of it as an innovation; for, in truth, the present loosened relation between our churches and their corresponding parishes, is a grievous departure from the wiser and better system of the olden time. We shall not yet point out the methods by which it may be practically and gradually restored to us; but we ask the reader to imagine its effect, if fully reinstated in any section whatever, and more especially in any poor and plebeian section of the city population. Just fancy the condition to be realized, (and it is a condition to which I shall undertake the showing, that we have

and that a tenfold greater influence within the locality was the palpable and almost immediate effect of it. If the good of such a conjunction was so sensibly experienced in a parish of 10,000 people, what may we not anticipate in the way of all moral and economical reform, were a city clergyman but permitted to concentrate all his efforts on a contiguous population of about two thousand, to the great bulk of whom he stood in the relation, at the same time, both of minister and pastor?

it in our power to approximate indefinitely,) of a clergyman, with his well-filled church, whose hearers are all, or nearly all, his parishioners; and with his moderate parish, whose parishioners of church-going age, are all, or nearly all, nay to a bare majority, or even but a considerable fraction, his hearers also. Under such an arrangement, there would be facilities afforded, and influences brought into play, which, in the present general and fortuitous economy of things, have no existence whatever. Let the residence of the minister be close on his assigned territory, and, if possible, within its limits; let him proceed on the understanding, that he has mainly, if not exclusively, to do with his parochial families; let him, by his frequent re-appearance in the midst of them, become the object of their frequent recognition, and so, at length after the lapse of not many months, the personal acquaintance of a goodly number, if not of all, of his people; let this acquaintance ripen into grateful and confiding friendship, as his attentions have time to multiply, and his daily errands of Christian benevolence to their homes have at last forced a way for him, to the hearts of the occupiers; let him by his habitual part in the christenings, and the burials, and the school examinations, and above all, at the sick and dying beds in the parish, implicate the very idea of his person, and utterance of his name, with the strongest instincts and affinities of each domestic circle that he has ever gladdened by his presence; and, most important circumstance of any, let it be imagined, that these parishioners with whom he

thus mingles through the week, are the hearers whom he addresses on the Sabbath, and so let him go forth amongst them, with the conjunct power, made by their very union tenfold more effective than either would be apart—and who does not see the very high position which such a man occupies for wielding a moral ascendancy over the population of whom he is, at one and the same time, both the minister and the pastor? And it may be difficult to explain (but it is not the less real on that account) the prodigious virtue which lies in its being not a scattered, but a compact and contiguous population—in consequence of which the direct influence which passes between the clergyman and his people, is mightily aided by the sympathy of a common feeling, and a common interest among themselves. As the matter stands, juxtaposition forms no security whatever for acquaintanceship—insomuch that the members of distinct households might live for years under the same roof, unknowing and unknown to each other. We know of no expedient better fitted to overcome this alienation, to annihilate this moral distance between our contiguous families, and more especially in the plebeian quarters of the town, than the re-establishment of this local, or strictly parochial system, in the midst of them. Let next-door neighbours be supplied with one common object of reverence and regard, in the clergyman who treats them alike as members of the same parochial family; let his church be the place of common repair upon the Sabbaths; let his sermon, which told the same things to all, suggest the common

topics, on which the similarly impressed might enter into conversations, that begin and strengthen more and more the friendship between them; let the intimacies of the parish children be formed and ripened together, at the same school—these all help as cementing influences by which to bind this aggregate of human beings into one community, and with a speed and certainty, now by many inconceivable, to set up a village or domestic economy, even in the heart of a crowded metropolis. It will at once be seen, with what force and celerity this consummation would be hastened forward by the movements of a clergyman, who, in the cultivation of his parochial domain, that home-walk of his daily and delightful labours, would have countless opportunities of grouping together the inmates of every little vicinity; and who, in their very relation to himself as a common centre, would come to recognise and to feel the affinity of a certain mutual relationship to each other. And here, perhaps, that reciprocal influence will be better understood, by which the week-day attentions of the minister to his parish are sure to be followed up, when there is room and opportunity, by the Sabbath attendance of the people upon his church. If he have but obtained an initial footing of this sort in his parish, the example will spread,—passing, as if by infection, from one neighbour to another; and he, reaping the fruit of his perseverance as a house-going minister, in yearly accessions to himself of a church-going people. If he will only bind himself to them as his people, they will at length bind themselves to him as their minister.

The collective voice, the collective habit of the parish will be upon his side, till attendance upon their own parish church, and their own parish minister, will come at last to be recognised and acted on, as one of the established proprieties of the vicinage with which he has to do. It was so in Edinburgh and the other towns of Scotland, for many years after the commencement of Presbytery; and had it not been for the mighty increase of population left unprovided with any corresponding increase of churches or clergymen, along with the sacrifice that was afterwards made of every parochial principle or privilege in the matter of seat-letting, we might still have beheld in our city parishes, the spectacle of so many unbroken masses, with the habit of Sabbath attendance on their own legal place of worship, in full vigour and operation among the families. It is difficult to imagine, indeed, how, under such a system of local surveillance, headed by the minister, and powerfully seconded by the auxiliaries of an eldership, each looking after, and with no very oppressive and formidable labour, the state of his own manageable district,—it is difficult, we say, to imagine how, under an economy like this, the families of our working classes, at all times alive to the observation and moral suasion of their superiors, could in any sensible numbers have fallen away from the habits and the decencies of their forefathers; and, far more, how the present frightful degeneracy and disease should have ever taken place, breaking out into the frequent and ever-enlarging spots of a foul leprosy, till at length we have spaces in many a

town, and most distinctly in our own, comprehensive of whole streets, nay, of whole parishes, in a general state of paganism. An entire disruption has taken place between the people and their minister,—they never at his church, he seldom or never in their houses. We speak not of those public nuisances, those haunts of open and declared profligacy wherewith the town is infested, and which it is for the civil authorities to put down; but we speak of the deep and dense irreligion, which, like the apathy of a mortification or paralysis, has stolen imperceptibly on the great bulk of our plebeian families; and which, under a rightly-sustained parochial regimen, the mild, but effective sway of parochial authorities, could never have taken place.

10. The causes of this woful departure from the good old way of our forefathers, we shall attempt afterwards to expound,—satisfied if, at present, we have succeeded in giving some idea of what we hold to be the right ecclesiastical arrangement for a great town. It lies in the restoration of that parochial system, under which ministers might concentrate all their week-day labours on the houses of their own local and assigned territory; and people, with a preference for its sittings on easy terms, might repair to their own church, so that the congregational and the parochial shall, as far as possible, be reduced to one and the same family, under the guidance and guardianship of one aud the same spiritual head. In this way, the united influences of the ministerial and the pastoral, or of the pulpit and household duties, are

conjoined, not only on the same people; but, what is of capital importance, on the people of the same locality,—who, in virtue of being operated on through the week by the same recognised and respected functionary, both in separate families and in contiguous groups of families, are brought under the powerful influence of those social or gregarious principles in our nature, which, with all the force and certainty of a moral epidemic, will impress upon them the same habit, and lead them, as if by one common impulse, to one and the same general observation. In other words, it needs but the assiduities of the clergyman, and of his various office-bearers, to secure at length the general observation of church-going; or give to the people a general direction, on the Sabbath, to that house of prayer, whence there emanates upon them, through the week, the manna of so many precious attentions, grateful to their hearts for the kindness which prompts them, and felt all the more profoundly from the sacredness of their object,—linked as it is, with the best and highest interest of themselves, and of all who are dearest to them. A population cannot long withstand an influence like this, if only kept up amongst them with sustained and busy perseverance; and with all the greater speed and certainty will they infallibly give way, in that they are a local or contiguous population. Such is the prolific virtue that lies in the mere principle of juxtaposition. Eighteen ministers in Edinburgh, though only of average talent and zeal, if each acting with concentration and effect on his own appropriate vineyard, would

possess in each the power to wield a tenfold greater ascendancy for good, than the same number, even though of the most gigantic abilities, on the present chaotic and chance-medley system of general congregations, under which the clergyman wears out a fortuitous and floundering existence,—lost and bewildered among the thousand random urgencies of his miscellaneous and ill-assorted task, a task completely irreducible to order, and of which he can see no issue in any definite or satisfactory accomplishment.

11. The goodly arrangement on which we have insisted requires three conditions for the fulfilment of it; first, that the pulpit and household duties of the clergyman shall be conjoined on one and the same people; secondly, that the people shall live contiguously together in one and the same locality or parish; and, thirdly, that the parish shall be of such moderate population as to admit of being thoroughly cultivated both ministerially and pastorally. The last of these three conditions is often treated of vaguely and indeterminately, and so with the effect of imparting a certain vagueness to the reasonings which are employed on this subject. And yet we hold that there is a certain and an assignable limit, capable of being stated with numerical precision, beyond which the population of a parish becomes excessive; so that every addition thenceforth to the families, if not provided for by larger ecclesiastical means, causes a distinct moral injury to the parish. In fact, the attentive reader will have already perceived that the two first conditions determine the third one;

but, for the sake of the important ecclesiastical principle which this question involves, we shall attempt a fuller explanation.

12. The question, it will be understood, is not how small the population of a parish ought to be, but how large it ought not to be. In regard to the former question, it were hardly possible to avoid its being pronounced upon vaguely and variably. A devoted clergyman could operate with fuller effect, and a greater Christian benefit to each family of his charge, if he were engaged with only a thousand instead of fifteen hundred people. My excellent friend, the Rev. Charles Bridges,* of Old Newton, Suffolk, finds, I am sure, most ample occupation among those six hundred people whom he may be said to have domesticated into one parochial family; and, were it not for his still more important services to the Christian church at large, would show, by his incessant labours, how possible it were to make out a most beneficial expenditure of all his strength and all his time amongst them. There can be no doubt that two diligent and devoted clergymen would render a greater amount of Christian good among twelve hundred people than one clergyman only: or, in other words, that a parish of this population might be advantageously broken into two. And it were difficult to say how far down the sub-division might be beneficially carried. In

* Author of a precious commentary on the 119th Psalm; of a book on the Christian Ministry, that cannot be too much read by students of divinity and clergymen; and of that interesting religious biography, the Life of Miss Graham.

that direction the question is an indeterminate one. And it is of less consequence, as in this age, not of increase, but of reductions, we are not called upon to determine it. In these days, there is no practical necessity for assigning or setting up a limit to guard against the evil of our having too many clergymen. But the spirit of our times demands that the limit should be distinctly and convincingly pointed out against the evil of having too few clergymen. In that direction, fortunately, the question is determinate.

13. We have already attempted to show how insignificant, in point of effect, the household ministrations of a clergyman are, when not backed by the impression of his pulpit ministrations; or, rather, with what tenfold efficacy a clergyman labours among the people when the two are compounded together. Or, in other words, the population among whom he labours through the week should not exceed beyond a certain proportion the population whom he can make, with average strength and exertion, to hear him on the Sabbath. It is thus that, in regulating and defining the proper census for a parish, regard should be had to the average compass of the human voice. This is an obvious and withal a definite principle, leading to a definite arithmetical result. If, on the average, it be enough for a man, engaged to the limit of his strength in the studies and visitations of the week, that he preaches to a thousand hearers on the Sabbath, then the maximum number of his parishioners, or number which ought not to be exceeded, becomes a matter of computation.

If the half of every population should be at church, then the whole population corresponding to a thousand hearers should be two thousand; for beyond this number the full attentions of a clergyman, as comprehensive both of the ministerial and pastoral, come to be impossible. We do not fix on this as the number at which the maximum of good accrues to a parish, but as marking the extreme limit, beyond which, if there be any excess, a most distinct and definable evil would accrue to it. We do not speak of two thousand as the amount to which the population of a parish might be advantageously extended; but as the amount to which, for the sake of raising a defence against a peculiar and withal powerful and clearly assignable cause of great moral injury, it ought to be confined. For ourselves, we cannot doubt that a much greater amount of Christian and moral good would be effected, by an ecclesiastical system in our cities of well-served parishes, consisting of a thousand each, rather than two thousand; or, assuming a population of two thousand for each parish, by every such parish having two ministers in a collegiate, rather than one only with a single charge. But the question, as we said before, is not how small the parishes, or how great the number of clergymen, ought to be; but how large the parishes, and, consequently, how small the number of clergymen ought not to be. The problem is, to assign the limit in that direction; and the virtue which we affirm to lie in the conjunction between the pulpit and household duties of the same minister to the same contiguous people,

supplies a most intelligible principle for the determination of that limit. Let two thousand be the greatest number that a clergyman can both ministerially and pastorally overtake, and we can state with precision the palpable effect of the addition even of one hundred to this previous population. By the postulatum, he preaches only to a thousand, and, corresponding to this, he can give the full benefit of his pastoral ministrations to two thousand. But to the additional hundred he can do neither the one nor the other. He cannot preach to them; and, should he charge himself with the performance of household duties on their behalf, this not only withdraws a part of his strength from the work of pastoral ministration among the original families, but it subjects him to an expenditure of strength among new families, far less beneficial and productive than before. They are in the condition of his parishioners, but not his hearers; and, agreeably to our former explanations, he works with greatly impaired effect amongst them. It is precisely at this limit that he experiences a sensible and sudden reduction of his influence. There is a mischief here done *per saltum;* and then do his parishioners begin to be aliens from that minister who ought to be the Sabbath counsellor and week-day friend of one and all of them. There is a certain assignable point, then, at which the transition is not a gradual one; at which families begin to form into what may be termed an out-field population; at which the parish church refuses to take them in, and, of consequence, the parish minister suffers an instant loss of

ascendancy—giving rise in every parochial community to a certain number, greater or less, of moral outcasts, suffered to wander beyond the pale of ecclesiastical surveillance; and we may add, in the now thoroughly ascertained impotency of the Voluntary system, without any security for an ecclesiastical influence of any sort being brought to bear upon them. It is woful to think that the moment we touch on the limit of a fully-peopled, and pass beyond to the state of an over-peopled parish, this evil is sure to alight on those who are the least able or the least willing to make their escape from it. In a parish, for example, of three thousand people, what class of residenters will the thousand belong to who are left out from the benefit of that influence which can only be extended with full effect to two thousand? The ablest to pay for sittings, and the willingest to avail themselves of their parochial privilege, will be the surest to maintain their occupancy in the church, and so to monopolize the best attentions of the clergyman—thereby excluding from the good of an Establishment the most helpless and the most needy, or the very description of families whose moral necessities it is the appropriate object and the highest glory of an Establishment to provide for. It is thus that the excess of a parish frustrates the special design of an establishment; and, by a strange fatality, inflicts its first and deadliest mischief upon those on account of whose benefit it is that an Establishment is particularly and pre-eminently called for. When a parish becomes excessive, the church might continue full,

but a certain number is necessarily left out; and what most cruelly traverses the purpose of an Establishment is, that they who continue are precisely those who might with the greatest safety have been abandoned to the Voluntary system; whereas they who fall off are precisely those whom that system does not reach and never can reclaim. From their want of wealth, and their want of will together, they are the first to make room for others in the competitions of an over-peopled parish; and little do they think, who tamper with the question of limits, and make so little of a few hundreds more than the parish church can accommodate, or the parish minister can overtake—little do they think, with what inevitable certainty they are consigning a portion of society to the out-fields of heathenism. By every instance of an over-peopled parish, the good of an Establishment is counteracted in regard to those on whose account an Establishment is most imperiously required. Those families are the first to suffer which stand most in need of it; and so the Establishment is paralyzed, not in regard to a subordinate, but in regard to the most vital and important of its functions. The unprovided surplus of every parish is of that very description on whom it is most necessary that the aggressive forces of an Establishment should be brought to bear; but who, in virtue of the supersaturation, are the first to recede from this wholesome operation, and the surest to be found at an irreclaimable distance away from it. Never then was there a more grievous paralogism or cross-purpose, than first to

have an Establishment, and then to have parishes with so many families beyond the possible reach of its influence,—*an outlandish and degraded caste, having all the lawlessness of gypsies, without their locomotion; living within the parochial boundaries, but all recklessly and at random, because beyond the authority of any parochial regimen; impregnating each neighbourhood with moral disease, and superadding to the numerical mischief of so many worthless households that wide-spread influence, wherewith, by the very contagion of their presence and example, they induce a general relaxation of principle, and deteriorate the whole tone and character of their surrounding society.

14. It was the parochial system, and that alone, which could have retained the bulk of our city population to their primitive habit of attendance on the ordinances of religion; and, *a fortiori*, now that they have fallen away from this habit, it is the parochial system, and that alone, which can recall them. It is only by each clergyman taking special possession of his own parish, and charging himself overhead with one and all of its families, that there can be aught like the working of a

* It is first setting up an apparatus, and then removing to an impracticable distance the main object of its erection. The only consistent way of following up the device of an establishment, is to have small enough parishes,—seeing that the principal design, and, indeed, the chief argument for such an institution, is to include within its grasp those very families which in too large parishes are the first and surest to fall away. And, accordingly, in the overgrown parishes of cities, out of these families there has necessarily been found a refuse population, which the Establishment, because of its inadequate extension, does not, and which the Voluntary system, because of its inherent feebleness, cannot overtake.

general effect upon the population. The measures should be forthwith entered upon, by which he might be enabled as speedily as possible to operate amongst them in the joint capacity of their minister and their pastor, in order that his week-day services might be seconded, or rather made tenfold more effectual, by his Sabbath ministrations. In reference to all the existing parishes this retracing operation must at the best be a very gradual one; but we trust that the few practical explanations which we are now to offer, may convince the reader that there is nothing impracticable, not even difficult, in any single step of the process; and that, therefore, on the whole, the process should not be stigmatized as a Utopian one.

15. It were indeed Utopian to expect of any people who have lapsed into a general habit of non-attendance, that the appetite or demand for the ministrations of the Gospel could be created amongst them in a single day. It were in utter violation, therefore, of all the laws and likelihoods of our nature—to think of substituting all at once so many parochial congregations, in place of the existing general congregations. A precipitate and instantaneous dismissal of the latter, in the sanguine hope that they would be replaced *per saltum* by the former, would leave us for years to come with very small and fractional congregations in a great number of our churches. It is not excepting in times of sweeping revolution, that great changes are effected by quick and desultory movements. It is in society as in nature; every great march of improvement is a gradual and pacific

one—like the silent motions of the firmament, the insensible but sure progress of the seasons, or any other of those beneficent cycles which take place in the works of creation. But, again, distinction must be made here between the setting up of a machine and the working of it. Time must be allowed ere those effects can be fully realized which we anticipate from the working of it. But no time should be lost in the setting of it up. The regulations should be made now, and the facilities should be ordained now, without which a general never can be transformed into a parochial congregation. After which the transformation will proceed gradually, and it will take years before it is consummated.

16. The first of these regulations is a rigid preference for the sittings to the actual and residing parishioners, at every term of seat-letting—before which the present extra-parochial occupiers must successively give way. But, as we have said already, the growth of this parochial demand must be gradual, and so the dispossession of the actual sitters would be alike gradual. The parochial demand, in fact, would be of more or less rapid growth, just as the ministers attended more or less through the week to the families of their own parishes. Those of them who had a taste for the cordialities of parochial intercourse; and rejoiced in their now growing acquaintance with groups of contiguous householders; and took a delighted interest in their own proper and parochial concerns; and enjoyed that sensation of relief, along with that actual experience of a far more

productive beneficence, to which their withdrawment from the bewildering generalities of the town, and the concentration of their efforts on the manageable institutes of a small manageable section of it, would infallibly give rise—Such of them who had the true spirit of localists, and preferred the certainties as well as charities of a home walk to the perplexities of a chaos, choosing rather to do a few things well, than encounter the fatigues, and at the same time be mortified by the utter fruitlessness of being overwhelmed with many things, —men who would not feel that they had lived in vain, if they had put a new face, and set up a new habit in a parish of two thousand people—Such ministers as these would multiply all the faster their parochial hearers, and earn sooner than the others the superior comfort as well as superior ascendancy which never fail to be the effects of a parochial congregation. Even with them I should hold it a great achievement, if, during the process of transition, they added a hundred parochial sitters to their churches in the year; and, rather than any sudden revolution, I should greatly prefer those full and final developments which are at length arrived at by the stepping-stones of a process that is strictly tentative and experimental.

17. It will be seen at once that there can be no effectual opening to such a process without a general lowering of the seat-rents. My own wish even for the largest towns is, that, to the extent of two-thirds of the accommodation in every church, the sittings on the average should not exceed three shillings each. One should like that not

only individual seats, but family pews, were accessible to the bulk of the population. It were a most desirable state of matters to bring it within the compass and means of the working classes, that whole seats should be taken by whole households; and that in family groups of worshippers, becoming every year more frequent, there was comprehended a large and ever-increasing proportion of the body of the parish. The hopes of the rising generation stand essentially connected with a growing juvenile attendance on the lessons of Christianity; and, in this view, we know not an object of greater moral importance, than seat-rents sufficiently low for the accommodation of the common people, not in individuals but in families. If two-thirds of every church were afforded at the rate which is now proposed by us, we should object less to a market price for the remaining third; and should rejoice, indeed, on more accounts than one, if this market price were to rise indefinitely—by the humbler classes in every parish availing themselves of their preference to the uttermost, and monopolizing the low-rented seats so as to make the competition of the higher classes all the more intense for the seats which remain to them. In this way, instead of a conflict as now, there would be a most delightful harmony between the moral prosperity of the town, and the monied prosperity of the corporation.

18. But after all these facilities have been granted, the interesting question remains—What are the likelihoods, that, with the church now open to the bulk of the parochial community, but with that

community at present in a state of desuetude and distance from all the ordinances of the gospel—what are the grounds for believing, that a minister with all his activity and zeal will succeed in reclaiming them? We have already, I trust, made it manifest, that in as far as this glorious achievement depends upon human effort, the likeliest and most productive of these efforts is a habitual forthgoing on his part among the habitations of his people. If he go much among them through the week, the unfailing result in time will be, that they shall come much about him on the Sabbath. This is the ligament, and we know not a more important one in the whole mechanism of human society, by which to elevate a degenerate population, and again to place them on that higher moral platform from which they have descended. There is no romance, there is a sober and home-bred reality in all the steps of this operation. On the very first movements of the clergyman, he will meet with the smiles of encouragement and welcome from every quarter of his parish, with a thousand promises of attendance on his church, many of which in the first instance will not be realized; but, with every month of perseverance in the assiduities of his office, he will find a lessening reluctance on the part of his people, and that even the obstinacy of their practical heathenism is not unconquerable. It will at length give way under the power of his sustained and duteous attentions. Providence will open a door for him, even to the most ruthless of the families; and, implicating his presence with the sicknesses and the

deaths and the funerals of every household, he will, on the sheer efficacy of his Christian worth, and with no other engine by which to make his way than Christian kindness, obtain an ascendant over the hearts of his people, only to be won by the omnipotence of charity.

19. The incredulity which prevails in regard to the moral power of the parochial system, is the pure result of inattention to all those lessons which experience gives of our nature. We ask these doubters to reflect on the mighty change, we might term it the mighty elevation, that would take place on the condition of our plebeian city families, could it be said of every one of them, that they had a Christian minister for their personal acquaintance and their friend. Now, the clergyman who would parochialize, might, without excessive labour, win this honourable and highly influential relation for himself to 500 families. It is not an airy imagination that we speak, it is a sober and every-day experience, when we affirm the immense good that such a man could work in his little kingdom, by the mere efficacy of moral suasion among its inmates and its occupiers. There is no man whose professional business places him on higher vantage-ground, than is possessed by him who marries, and baptizes, and ministers the holy sacrament, and stimulates the education of the young; and speaks home on the Sabbath to the consciences of the very people with whom he companies in the various acts and exercises of Christian beneficence through the week—in readiness at every call of family distress, and through the various organiza-

tions of parish schools, and parish library, and local associations of religious philanthropy, and monthly meetings of the agencies, which have been devised by his wisdom and public spirit for the good of his own assigned territory—collecting around him the Christian worth that already exists in it, and propagating a wholesome influence, even to its most hidden recesses, and its heretofore most impregnable strongholds of vice and irreligion. There is no aggregate of human beings that can long withstand the influence of such manifold attentions and applications as these, and certainly none that could stand out for ever against them, if but constantly and determinedly persevered in; and more especially if concentrated by the same man, on the same vineyard of contiguous habitations. We greatly wish that we could make the good of this last circumstance as palpable to the reader as it is of importance in itself—we mean the concentration of all these united influences on the families, one and all, who reside within the same geographical boundaries. The whole gist of our argument lies in the difference it makes to the power and tactics of an ecclesiastical system on cities—whether it shall be a mere system of congregations, or a system of parishes, and so of distinct parochial and territorial managements. Under the one system, the people are left to seek out their own minister, and *so many* seek him out accordingly. Under the other system, the minister is bound to seek out, not so many, but all the people within the limits of his allocated domain; and what we affirm is, that in every large town, with parishes small

enough and ministers many enough, this would create the numerical difference of thousands and tens of thousands in our church-going population, and having their families brought under a moral regimen, now unfelt and unknown by the great mass of the commonalty. It is this consideration which makes us so resolute in the cause of keeping up the full number of our clergymen within the city of Edinburgh; and extending, by every possible means, the number without the city, for the benefit of those immense suburbs which have accumulated around it. No popular outcry can dislodge the impression from us, that by consenting to the reduction of our clergymen, we should incur the guilt of a most heinous profanation. In face of all the obloquy which has been heaped upon it, we affirm ours to be a great moral and Christian cause. Our ecclesiastical apparatus might be made greatly more effective; but we can on no principle whatever consent to the abridgment of it. It is capable of receiving a large addition to its force; but cannot admit, without a great moral loss to the community, of any subtraction from its magnitude. In contending for an Established Church, and for the integrity of its endowments, we feel as if embarked on a struggle of pure and high patriotism—believing as we do, that the cause of our venerable Establishment is pre-eminently the cause of the common people.*

* We are sensible that many things would need to be added or extended, ere a full exhibition could be made of the parochial system, with all its powers and all its advantages. More particularly, we might have insisted on this distinction, that in the system of general congregations, it is extremely difficult to uphold

20. We have offered a most feeble and inadequate representation of this *great* subject, having come greatly short even of our own sense of the worth and magnitude of the cause. We confess ourselves to be most intensely set on the restoration of the true parochial system in our cities; and that because it bears with such signal effect on the reformation of the common people—that highest object which can be proposed either to the Christian philanthropist or to the patriot. Our hopes we admit to be sanguine; but we believe them to be solidly founded—because resting, under the blessing of Heaven, on the power of Christian truth, when combined with Christian charity—the one spoken Sabbath after Sabbath by the minister from the pulpit; the other brought to bear through the week, in a thousand nameless but most endearing

them undiminished and unimpaired, but by the superior attractiveness of such powerful and extraordinary preaching as can only be found among the few; and hence when a new general congregation is formed, it is often at the expense of fractional diminutions on all the previous ones. Whereas, to uphold a parochial congregation, nothing more is requisite than such Sabbath and such week-day ministrations, as any man of common intelligence might give, if he have but those principles of Christian worth, and feelings of Christian charity, which, along with industrious habits, are not confined to the few, but found, it is to be hoped, among the many. In other words, the system of general congregations can only be upheld by powers which are rare, whereas the system of parochial congregations is maintained rather by principles which are frequent. And besides, a new parochial congregation is not built up at the expense of previous ones. It is formed out of new materials. The parochial system may be said to create its own customers. It generates a demand commensurate with the supply; and so can be extended, as commerce is, by the opening up of new markets of a certain kind, without injury to any pre-existent interest. The system of general congregations stops at a limit which leaves out the great majority. The parochial system of congregations can be made co-extensive with the wants of the whole population.

attentions, by the same minister on the families of the parish. The man who performs his ready visit at every call of distress, and prays at every dying bed, and ministers at every funeral, gracing and dignifying by his presence each group, however humble, of parochial mourners who assemble to carry a neighbour to his grave,—in one word, who strikes in on every occasion when human hearts are most alive to the charm of sympathy, and most susceptible of a good and a holy impression from the services of religion,—such a man, backed by the sacredness of his character, and having to do at one and the same time both with the feelings and consciences of his people, could not long, if the promises of the gospel and the laws of our nature abide unrepealed—could not long be withstood, even among the most depraved and the most degenerate of families. What Howard experienced of the omnipotence of kindness in the worst of prisons, he would be much surer to experience and exemplify in the worst of parishes; and at length earn for himself such an ascendancy over the vineyard of his allotted labours as would subordinate the great bulk of its occupiers in willing obedience to his sway. Every thing, we are profoundly sensible, depends, under the operation of the divine Spirit, every thing depends upon the minister; and a thousand times more upon his moral and Christian than upon his literary qualifications. If he do succeed, it will be the achievement of principle and not of talent, the triumph of Christian and heaven-born worth, and not the triumph of high or heaven-born genius.

In a word, our confidence is not in great powers, but in great piety; and however desirable, when we can find it, to obtain the union of both—yet Heaven, we foresee, will put a most impressive mockery on all our hopes, if, trusting to eloquence or general attraction, we shall prefer the man with these pulpit accomplishments alone to recommend him, to him who, plying daily and devotedly at his allotted task, is chiefly known among the families as the best friend of themselves and their children, and venerated by all as a man of faith and of prayer.

No. II.

# CHURCHES AND CHAPELS;

OR,

# THE NECESSITY AND PROPER OBJECT

OF

# AN ENDOWMENT:

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF A SPEECH DELIVERED BEFORE THE PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH.

# CHURCHES AND CHAPELS.

WHATEVER the difference of opinion might be as to the best way of providing for it, I trust that we are all most intently and honestly set on the great object of making our Establishment more commensurate than it is to the moral and religious wants of our increased population. But there is one most essential element overlooked by many, I think by the majority, of those who take an interest in the Chapel question; and that is, the difference in point of efficacy between an Establishment viewed merely as an assemblage or system of congregations, and an Establishment viewed as a system of parishes. Were this matter sufficiently pondered, we should become more sensible to the vast importance of adjusting our measures to the latter, rather than to the former system—the one, that is the parochial, when completed, being, I will venture to say, of tenfold greater efficacy than the other, or congregational, with all the completeness which can possibly be given to it. But ere I enter any farther on the work of explanation, I should like it to be distinctly understood, that it is not for the purpose of throwing any obstacle in the way

of that ultimate accomplishment, which I trust all of us have most sincerely at heart. My object is to supplement, and not to oppose; not to raise any obstacle, but to suggest a facility, which, if neglected or left behind, instead of being carried along with the arrangement now proposed, will leave it utterly powerless as to the effect of extending the means of Christian education in the land —an arrangement, in fact, which, under the guise of a mighty enlargement to the apparatus of our Church, will leave it in the same state of shortness and deficiency as before, without making one footstep in advance for the overtaking of our unprovided commonalty, and under which the same number of families will remain as destitute of the word and ordinances of religion as they are at this moment. What I have to propose ought not to delay the full incorporation of our Chapels with the regular ecclesiastical system of the Church of Scotland. But even though it should for two or three years, I would rather have the thing thoroughly and well done by the end of that time, than that we should plunge and precipitate ourselves into an immediate measure, and, after all, obtain but a semblance of good, without securing its substance or its reality.

What I understand by a merely congregational church, is a church attended by hearers from all possible distances, and without regard to the locality in which they reside. There is no geographical relation between the church they go to and the house they live in; and, apart therefore from the influence of any such relation, they simply go, because on other grounds they have a preference

either for the place of worship itself, or for the minister who preaches in it. Here, then, we have an assemblage of people, collected indiscriminately from all quarters; and we have only to add one circumstance more, in order to complete the representation both of the vast majority of our dissenting chapels, and of very many of our chapels of ease—we mean, that the minister is supported by the contributions of his hearers, whether these contributions are made in the shape of seat rents, or in spontaneous and free-will offerings of any other form. This is a new characteristic; and some epithet or other is necessary by which it may be characterized. In order to designate the circumstance of the hearers being gathered indiscriminately from all places, and not from within the limits of any special locality, we have called the house they assemble in a congregational place of worship. To designate the circumstance of the chapel being provided, and the minister being supported by the offerings of the congregation, we shall further call it a voluntary place of worship. It is obvious, that for the upholding of such a concern, there must be the concurrence of two distinct elements—a good enough ability, and a good enough disposition, on the part of the hearers, for defraying the expenses thereof; that is, for building and keeping in repair the fabric in which they assemble, and for some sort of maintenance to the clergyman who there officiates. There must both be a wealth and a will; and unless these two things meet together, the establishment of such a chapel need not be attempted, or if attempted,

must infallibly turn out to be an abortion and a failure.

Now it is of importance to consider, how, when thus limited, the country will get on; or how, under such a merely congregational and voluntary system, its population will be served with the lessons of Christianity. The first indispensable element to the maintenance of such a congregation, we have already found to be a certain degree of wealth on the part of its members; who, either through the medium of high enough seat rents, or in some other way, must make good the expenses of the concern. But, at this rate, many are the poor and the pennyless who will not be overtaken—because beyond the reach, as it were, of a Christianizing operation, when conducted merely on the congregational and voluntary principle. The operation might be on the whole a productive one, if confined to the upper surface of society, and with such means for carrying it forward, as are furnished by the golden seat rents of the affluent and the noble. It might penetrate even a considerable way through so many of the successive strata; although, at each new descent, it will be found to leave out a greater and a greater number—comprehending, however, some of all degrees, from the highest of our patricians, down to the very lowest of our middling orders, in the shape of master tradesmen, or respectable artisans; but scarcely ever touching, or at least very rarely, and only here and there, any individual of that immense multitude, the children of handicraft and hard labour, who compose the substratum or subsoil of the

commonwealth. Here, then, there is a mass of immortality, scarcely, if at all entered on—a vast and crowded assemblage of human creatures, poor in outward condition, but rich in the materials of a great spiritual manufacture, and by which the most despised amongst them might be made to undergo the most glorious of all transformations. A Christian, in whose eye the soul of a poor man, on the high scale and standard of eternity, is of equal value to that of a rich, cannot but recoil from the unholy attempt of the destructionists of our day, who would erect their voluntary scheme, not only on the ruins of all that is established, but on the utter ruin and abandonment of the Christian interests of the common people; and, while looking to it in its causes, he simply puts it down as one of the many crudities which are now so rife, of headlong and frenzied innovation—he cannot, with a full view of its consequences, but deprecate and disown it, as he would a most revolting impiety.

But we have said, that along with the wealth to pay for attendance on the ministrations of the gospel, there must also be a will for these ministrations—so that unless the wealth and the will go together, the attendance must decline. And, accordingly, even where there is a wealth, if the will be awanting, this melancholy consequence may be often realized—as with the Sabbath-breakers, or ordinance despisers, among the great and noble of our land, the influence of whose example passes downwards through all the lower gradations of society; but with a tremendous reinforcement when

we descend to the lowest, where, along with the will totally extinguished, the wealth is totally awanting. Accordingly, it is in the plebeian class, where the high seat rents have made such fearful havoc on the regularity of all those habits and principles which obtained in other days. It would imply a strong will indeed on the part of a poor man for the services of the gospel, if, though only to be had at a heavy price, he will nevertheless pay, rather than forego the benefit of them to himself and to his family. And, on the other hand, when, by any cause whatever, he begins to falter or to decline in his attachment to the ministrations of the sanctuary, let the obstacle of a purchase money, doubly or trebly greater than he can well afford—let this obstacle be thrown across his path, and it will operate with decisive effect to confirm his now wavering inclinations on the side of heathenism—supplying at once the temptation and the apology for withdrawing himself from those tabernacles of righteousness that were frequented by his forefathers. It is thus, that with headlong and most fearful rapidity, our general population have fallen away, not from the churches of the Establishment alone, but, speaking comprehensively, from all places and assemblies of public worship whatsoever—insomuch (as can be made good from our ecclesiastical statistics) whole districts might be named, where, in contiguous thousands and tens of thousands, there is not one tithe of the people who go any where. In other days the association stood between wealth and irreligion. But now, a profane, a profligate, an utterly de-

praved and alienated commonalty, is the great moral distemper, the crying evil of our times.

Before making our special application to the question before us, let us beg that you will keep in recollection, both the characteristics which have been assigned to the Chapels of Ease, and of dissent, and omit neither of them—we mean their being congregational, as distinct from parochial; and their being voluntary, as distinct from endowed. It is because of the latter characteristic, that the seat rents are necessarily higher than they might otherwise have been; and it is this which makes voluntary churches so ineffective, for keeping up the religion of the poor, or for making head against the want of wealth in that class of society. But it is because of the former characteristic, that is, because of their being merely congregational, that these Chapels are so ineffective for keeping up the religion of the community at large, or for making head against the want of will in all classes of society. It is the endowed system which stands adapted, and should ever be made subservient, to the purpose of meeting the one want—the want of wealth. But let it be precisely understood, that it is the parochial system which stands adapted to the other want, or the want of will. Why, a merely congregational church is filled by those who have the will already, and is utterly powerless in its bearings on those who want that will. It is filled from all quarters, and at all distances, by those who are previously willing to attend it. It is repaired to by the *rari nantes vasto gurgite*, who, in a mass of surrounding irreligion, have retained unbroken

their love for the ordinances of the gospel. But how can such an apparatus as this be made to bear on the mighty intermediate spaces, all in a swarm with misguided, and misthriven, and neglected families?—who, under the system which we are now endeavouring to expose, never will be reached by any aggressive or pervading influence whatever. The minister of such a chapel cannot do it. He is occupied with his general hearers, and most usefully occupied, in keeping up among them the tastes and the habits of religious observation. But we speak of the untrodden intervals between one hearer and another, and which he cannot possibly fill up. Why, the circle, whose centre is his meeting-house, and whose radius passes at its further extremity through the tenement of his most distant hearer—such a circle would comprehend, in Edinburgh, a population of fifty thousand, and in London, a population of half a million. There is no other way of addressing ourselves with effect to the moral cultivation of this stupendous domain, but by breaking it up into parishes, and each of its ministers going forth on the territorial principle, charged with the care and the cognizance of all its families—keeping up, by his varied attentions, the spiritual appetite where it exists, and reviving it when it has fallen into dormancy—sustaining, by the external appliance of his household visits and week-day ministrations, that will for religion, and for its services, which, when left to itself, is so miserably apt to wither into extinction—doing, on the large scale of a parish, all that a city missionary does on the smaller scale of a district. This is

the only way which experience and common sense tell can be effective for the recovery of our degenerate population. And, branded though it be as Utopian, yet to look for it in any other way—to dream indefinitely and generally of some work of reformation, without each separate agent setting doggedly to his own manageable section of it—thus to lose ourselves in universals, in the lofty neglect or scorn of particulars,—speculatively to think that the thing, in its totality, may, *somehow or other*, be accomplished without any filling up practically of the requisite details, or the drudgery of a most active and laborious service, on each separate portion of the territory,—this is what we should understand by airy or poetical imagination, as opposed to the sober realities of an everyday business—this is what we should pronounce upon as most fond and fanciful Utopianism.

But, coming at once to the Chapel question, it may be thought a sufficient provision in favour of the object for which I am contending, if a territorial district be attached to each Chapel, and so a full recognition be made of the parochial system. But to make it a full realization, as well as full recognition, of the parochial system, let us specify what is wanting, and without which we shall have but the form without the fulfilment, but the semblance without the verification of it. Suppose this newly-assigned parish to be of a population under three thousand—for up to that number it should never go—and then let us consider with what effect the Chapel minister, supported as he now is, can bear upon its families. You will recollect, that he is

supported by the seat rents of a congregation who have come to him indiscriminately from all quarters; and those seat rents must be high enough, both to make out his maintenance, and to defray all the other expenses of the institution. Now I venture to say, that in the vast majority of instances, such an institution in the midst of a plebeian district will be altogether *effete*, as to the object of pervading the bulk of its families. It will operate superficially over a far larger space, but with nothing like a condensed or concentrated effect on the space which has been assigned to it. It will draw the better sort of hearers (by which is meant, hearers of the richer sort) from beyond as well as within its locality—skimming far and wide among the higher or even middling, but passing altogether over the heads of the general population. In a word, we shall have, by this measure, but a surface dressing here and there in certain parts of the vineyard, without any thing like a deep or a thorough culture of it. The proposal, as now made, is but one of promise, and not of performance, standing forth in the guise of a mighty accession to the forces of our Establishment, yet labouring under an impotency, the real cause of which it were important to ascertain.

The object of the overture which has now been laid before us, is, that the ministers of Chapels of Ease shall be admitted, *instanter*, into all the privileges and powers which rightfully belong to the pastors of congregations. I am for doing a great deal more than this. I am for admitting them, with the utmost possible speed, into all the

privileges and powers which rightfully belong to the pastors of congregations and *parishes*. But to give them parishes without parishioners were a mockery; and the privilege which I long to obtain for them is, that they should be released from the incapacities, not only of the congregational, but of the voluntary system likewise; or, in other words, that the barrier shall be removed, which, in their present circumstances, and as at present supported, would lie between them and the great bulk and body of their parochial families.

But do we call it nothing, if a territorial district shall be assigned to each of these chapels—if the chapel be henceforth called a church, a regular parish church—with its chapelry a parish, and its minister a regular constituent member of the presbytery? We call it little or nothing to the great object of a territorial establishment. It is true, a parish has been assigned to the chapel; but, depending as it does on the main supply of its hearers from abroad, the minister, even though he do convert this parish into the home-walk of his daily ministrations, has no Sabbath accommodation which he can offer to the bulk of its families. And besides, how can he expatiate in the parochial territory without the desertion, *pro tanto*, of his extra-parochial hearers—many of them perhaps the richest and most influential of his congregation? The endowed minister may feel himself at liberty thus to act; but there lies a peculiar helplessness on the chapel minister, circumstanced as he now is, and from which I think every attempt should be made on the part of our Church to obtain his

extrication. And here let me state the experience of one of these ministers, an intimate and much respected friend of my own, who has at least an understood district, and along with this every disposition, I am sure, to promote the Christian well-being of all its families. With this view he did select one of its plebeian compartments, which he plied with week-day attentions; and in return for which he obtained a Sabbath attendance, at little or no rent however, in the unoccupied seats of his chapel. He is confident that the attendance could have been kept up, nay, indefinitely extended, or, in other words, a large outfield population could have been reclaimed, but for one essential defect under which the chapel system at present labours. And what is that defect? Not the want of a seat in the presbytery—not even the want of a distinct session—though this, no doubt, is a grievous incapacity, and a remedy should be immediately applied to it. But even this, and every other remedy, will be wholly inefficient to the object of letting down the light and lessons of the gospel among the tenements of the poor—so long as there is wanting an endowment; or, in other words, so long as there is wanting, not a high stipend for the minister, for that is really not the proper object of an endowment—but a low seat rent for the commonalty of his parish. As matters are actually situated, my friend could not persevere in his laudable enterprise. The whole concern is upholden by seat rents; and so he could not, though he would, abandon his extra-parochial hearers on whom he most depended, even for the

sake of those parochial families who stood most in need of his ministrations. He could not afford thus to fill his place of worship with non-effectives, and therefore to the exclusion of those whose presence and whose payments were indispensable to the very being of his chapel. Let us not, therefore, rush into an arrangement blindfolded, and with our eyes shut against that one circumstance on which the efficacy of an Establishment, and of every scheme for giving energy and extension to an Establishment, most essentially hinges. In devising the best system for our chapels, let us not overlook what is best for the Christian good of their respective vicinities; or neglect the inquiry, how it is that they can be made to bear with greatest effect on their immediately surrounding population.

But let me give another instance. In the district of the Water of Leith, we have a population of 1289; and of these only a hundred and fifty individuals have sittings, in all places of worship—a small proportion, it may be thought, but not smaller than what obtains, on the average, in the plebeian districts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and many other large towns in Scotland. Of these hundred and fifty, sixty attend their own parish church—a very large proportion in such a parish; for did each of its districts send forth a like proportion, it would make out a congregation of between three and four thousand hearers. But the instructive circumstance is, that some years ago a chapel, a very large and commodious chapel, was built in its vicinity; and one might have expected,

that from this quarter the religious destitution of so many families would have been largely provided for. Well then, what statistically is the fact? Why, the chapel in question only draws seven sitters out of this locality. Abstract these seven from the 150, and there are 143 sitters to a population of 1289; or doubling, as we ought, the 143, there are 286 people out of this number sufficiently provided for —leaving in practical heathenism a little more than a thousand, all living immediately beside each other, and within the limits of the understood district of Stockbridge Chapel, which, overflowing with hearers from all parts, and these chiefly of the upper grades in society, draws but seven from a contiguous population of one thousand souls in its own immediate neighbourhood. Is this the way in which an Establishment should acquit itself of its own peculiar system, as a system of parishes? By offering to draw its geographical lines over the face of the land, and thus dividing it into distinct localities, does it not profess to charge itself with the religion of all the families that are within the limits of each of them? And in attempting to make this profession good, shall we overlook the most essential circumstance to the fulfilment of it? Are we to deceive ourselves with the fancied sufficiency of the mere ecclesiastical organization that is now proposed, when, in point of fact, we shall not thereby have moved one footstep in advance towards the great object of making our establishment more adequate than it is now to the needs of our over-peopled parishes? Would the admission of the chapel minister of Stockbridge into the Presbytery of

Edinburgh—would it tell, would it practically tell, on the habit of the families in the Water of Leith, and evoke them to a Sabbath attendance on the house of his public ministrations? A mere student of church law, versed in all the points and proprieties of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, with its various abstract constitutional questions, he may apprehend so—accomplished, and it may be profoundly, in all the legal categories of the subject, but raw and inexperienced, withal, in the human nature that has to do with the result of it, if he think for a moment that the elevation of the chapel minister to the presbytery is to have any substantive effect on the attendance of the families in the chapelry around him. To get at these, and such as these, in the lanes and alleys of our plebeian districts, is the grand purpose of an endowment; and without it, there is an immense, a yearly increasing number, a vast majority, I would say, of the working classes, in every large town, who never will be reached by voluntary churches; and it matters not to this effect, whether these voluntary churches be within or without the Establishment. In either situation, whether on this side of the line or on the other side of it, the essential feebleness of the voluntary system will adhere to every institution of the kind. If it be of the genus voluntary, it signifies not, to its real strength and power of application for the religious good of the community at large, whether it be of the indigenous or of the exotic species; whether it be found on the infields of the Establishment or in the outfields of sectarianism. The one has no more of a pervading

virtue than the other has; and to give it this virtue, you must give it an endowment—not, I repeat, for the sake of a high stipend to the minister, but of a low seat-rent to the hearers; to release him from all dependance on the people without his locality, and to remove the obstacle which now stands between his church and the bulk of the people within his locality; to disengage him, in fact, for the entire cultivation of his own proper vineyard, and enable him to bring the full weight of his influence to bear, both ministerially and pastorally, upon the very humblest of its families.

Let me now take the instance of Anderston, a pendicle of Glasgow, with a population large enough, I believe too large, for a parish, and a chapel of ease, whose pulpit is filled by a gentleman that would do honour to any establishment. But by what description of hearers is the chapel itself filled? Not certainly, as it were desirable it should, not *en masse* by the plebeian families of Anderston. We hear of grandees from Blythswood Square, peopled by the highest aristocracy of the city, being members of that congregation; but then, I say, that, charged as the country's Establishment professes itself to be with the Christian instruction of the country's population, it will be quite monstrous in us to overlook the only conditions by which such a profession can really be substantiated. Now that a movement in the status of the chapel ministers is proposed—and I for one rejoice, and heartily wish all prosperity and effect to it—these gentlemen must allow us to devise the methods by which, consistently with the appropriate functions of an

establishment, we can carry it forward to its best and wisest fulfilment. It is for this purpose that I desiderate an endowment; nor do I see how such unoccupied spaces as Anderston in Glasgow, can possibly be provided for without one. Unoccupied, I say, notwithstanding that there is to be seen the architecture of a well-attended chapel, and there are heard the weekly sermons of one of the ablest of our ministers. And my demand for an endowment is—not that the chapel minister of Anderston might live better, but that the people in the locality of Anderston might take seats lower than they do at this moment. The purpose for which I ask an endowment is—not to bring up the condition of the minister, but to bring down the scale of seat-rents; to release him, in fact, from his present dependence on the patricians at a distance, and that he might afford to spend all his strength and his time among the plebeians of his own proper and immediate charge. Ere the chapels take their place side by side with the churches of our Establishment, I should like if there could be attached to them that wherein the chief glory, or the peculiar distinction, of an establishment lies. It is not the defect of their ecclesiastical organization which has so struck them with impotency. Let this be repaired to-morrow, and the essential defect of voluntary churches will still adhere to them. They may have full and flourishing congregations, I grant; but made up of whom? Exclusively, almost exclusively, of the wealthy and middling classes, with but a fraction, if any, of our men of handicraft and hard labour. Voluntary churches may be

carried a certain length ; but they have their limit, and it is a limit which leaves out an overwhelming majority of the country's population. It is only in virtue of an endowment that this limit can be forced, or a way be opened, by which the lessons of the gospel might be carried to every door, and so as to overspread the whole length and breadth of the land. In the act of transmuting chapels into churches, let us not forget wherein it is that the secret of the one's great weakness, or wherein it is that the secret of the other's great strength, lies. We must labour to realize an endowment for them—not, let me state it once more, not as carrying in it a badge of dignity to the clergyman ; but as carrying in it the boon of a cheap education to the common people.

But not to multiply instances, let me now conclude with but one more, as a specimen and illustration of many hundreds besides. I will mention the Cowcaddens of Glasgow, now a preaching station, under the zealous and paternal fostering of Dr Black, the acting minister in the Barony. It might be thought a step in advance, were this preaching station transformed into a chapel of ease; but, to evince the singular maladjustment of an unendowed chapel to the wants of a needy population—I should anticipate, from a change of this sort, that the families of that plebeian district would, in consequence of such an erection, drift back again to the heathenism from which they have been evoked so recently. The truth is, that a preaching station, as commonly supported, is just a little endowment, under which the ministrations of the gospel are

dealt forth gratuitously to the people—whereas a chapel, all whose expenses are defrayed by the seat-rents, would vault over the heads of the humble commonalty there; and its pews might be filled by such people, far and near, as were able and willing to pay for them, but to the almost utter exclusion of the families immediately around it. There is no mere ecclesiastical organization that will repair this grievous incapacity. Nothing but an endowment will do it. The popular and prevailing cry at this moment is, to put down endowments; the inevitable consequence of which would be, to set up the seat-rents. Now, in opposition to this, our desire is to set up endowments—and that in order to bring down the seat-rents. There is no other way of getting at the general population; and even then, the minister thus supported must have a locality small enough, as well as seat-rents low enough for the families, however poor. The cause of endowments, rightly understood, is essentially popular. The common conception of them is not the true one. Their proper and original object is not to aggrandize the clergyman, but to cheapen the Christian education of the people. Because a question of pounds, shillings, and pence, it is felt, or imagined by many, to have in it a certain taint of sordidness. Yes! it is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence; but not so much of how many pounds the minister shall receive, ere he be authorized to preach, as of how few pence the people shall pay for the privilege of hearing him. This last is the capital design of an endowment. Ministers are the fishers of men; and the

effect of an endowment is to lengthen their line, and enable them to reach downward to the lowest gradations of the commonwealth. The voluntaries are a kind of fly-fishers—whose operations do not reach to the muddy bottoms, to those depths and those fastnesses of society, which to them are inaccessible. And a chapel of ease, give it any ecclesiastical organization you like, is just such a voluntary. Nominally, you may give it the title of an established church; but you will never give it the power or the properties of an established church, without an endowment.

I confess, that any attention which I have given to this matter has endeared the Establishment more to me than ever, when I thus see the essential principle on which it rests pervading so many of its subordinate questions, and furnishing indeed the best clue for the solution of them—a principle announcing its own immense value, by the frequent and important applications of which it is susceptible, and which we never fail to come into contact with, when we go deep into any of those topics which concern either the stability of our Church, or the further extension of it. These are not the times for losing sight of this principle, or of departing from it, and far less of traversing it. An establishment cannot subsist without an endowment, and as little can it have any solid or substantial extension without one; but, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, resting partly on iron, and partly on clay, it will contain within itself the elements of its own dissolution. We want not to do away a single existing chapel, but to strengthen them, and to

multiply them indefinitely. We want to impregnate each with the proper virtue of an establishment, so as not merely to communicate the property of endurance, but the property of blessing, by its presence, the poorest and most plebeian of the families around it. We are the more zealous, at this particular moment, that we should go wisely and rightly about the proposal to turn chapels into churches, when we witness such an inclination on the part of city rulers for virtually turning churches into chapels, for stripping them of their endowment, and throwing their chief, if not their whole, support on the produce of seat-rents—thus converting them into mere voluntaries, and raising a barrier, which all the energies of the voluntary system can never force, between the ordinances of the gospel and the vast majority of the population. The example of Glasgow has been quoted with high approbation; and that because, with all the accuracy of a mercantile account current, the annual produce of the seat-rents, and the annual expenses of the Establishment, are found so nearly to balance each other; though Glasgow on this question stands forth as a beacon to be shunned, and not as an example to be followed, with its twelve churches; and its two hundred and two thousand people, or its single church for each seventeen thousand of human beings. This comes of voluntaryism; and let us take care that we strengthen not its fallacious argument by new precedents of our own making. Once that chapels are recognised as churches without an endowment, their full and flourishing congregations will be

seized on by the slight and superficial economists of our day as perfectly decisive of the whole controversy. Their habit is to look only to the state of the congregations in the fabrics, and not to the state of the people in the surrounding parishes. It is for the sake of these people that we resist the spoliation which is now attempted on the endowments of our churches, and it is for their sake also that we plead for an endowment to our chapels. We want that, to each of them in particular, there shall be attached that which constitutes the glory and the distinction of an Establishment upon the whole—even that, through its means, the tidings of salvation might be carried to the lowest abodes of destitution—that by its means the poor might have the gospel preached to them.

No. III.

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# THE CAUSE

OF

# CHURCH EXTENSION,

AND THE

# QUESTION SHORTLY STATED,

BETWEEN

# CHURCHMEN AND DISSENTERS

# IN REGARD TO IT.

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Our cause has suffered much by its common appellative of *Church Accommodation*. It has been the fertile parent of misconceptions and errors innumerable. It is true it is only a word. But philosophy tells of the influence of words upon thoughts; and never was this so verified by experience as in the history of our proceedings, and more especially in the obstinacy of that misunderstanding which we have had to encounter, and which, with all our most anxious and repeated explanations, we have never been able to dislodge, or get the better of. Church Accommodation, in common apprehension, is but significant of Church-room; and hence the wide-spread delusion, that enough of Church-room is our great specific for the moral regeneration of the country. No wonder that this mystic faith in the efficiency of mere architecture is what the people cannot sympathize with,—this marvellous moral power, ascribed to the masonry

and the carpentry of new fabrics, is what they cannot comprehend. We have long lamented the evil influence of this our designation, and laboured with all our might against it; but without effect. Let us reason and illustrate as we may, the power of no demonstration of ours will ever carry it over the power of that simple vocable Church Accommodation. The lengthened argument will never dissipate the spell which is wrapt up and concentrated in the single term,—on every repetition of which is lighted up again the old association, the old and obstinate prejudice. We shall only shake ourselves loose of the mischief we have suffered from this term by quitting it altogether. The *thing* we are seeking to accomplish will come to be better understood, after we have made our escape from the mischievous, the magical influence of its unhappy *name*.

We have for many months been sensible of this misnomer, and of the heavy disadvantage under which it has laid our cause. We long to be delivered from it. We trust that the next General Assembly will take from us our present most undescriptive title, and substitute another and a better in its place. We greatly prefer *Church Extension** to *Church Accommodation*, though even this is not fully or adequately expressive of our object. But a name should be brief as well as comprehensive; and, in the present instance, we find it extremely difficult to devise a name that shall combine both these properties; or so to

* This is now the current designation of our cause both in England and Scotland.

express the whole design of our Committee by its designation, as to avoid what were much too cumbersome and complex and circumlocutory, for the purposes of a title. And by adopting the new title of Church Extension, we shall at least rid ourselves of the injury that we have sustained from the old one of Church Accommodation, under which we have been regarded as a mere Committee of stone and lime; or as if actuated by the Quixotic imagination, that on the strength of churches alone, viewed but in the light of a material apparatus, we were to Christianize the population—expecting of these new erections, that, like so many fairy castles, they were, of themselves, to transform every domain in which they were placed into a moral fairyland; and to operate, by their very presence or juxta-position, some mighty and mysterious change on the hearts and habits of the surrounding householders. On the simple abandonment of our present designation, these illusions would all be rectified; and the public might come at length to see, in sober earnest, the actual realities, and soberly to estimate the rational likelihoods of our undertaking.

So much for the proper name of our undertaking. But a more important matter is the precise object of it. To explain this is the design of the following pages,—in the composition of which we have studied two things. First, to be so brief as that we might be generally read; Secondly, to be so explicit as that we might be generally understood. For the better achievement of this end, we shall present our statements in the order of so many

distinct propositions, couched in the fewest possible words; but so as that, while the meaning is expressed as concisely, it may be also expressed as clearly as is practicable; and for this latter purpose, we, on fit occasions, shall superadd an illustrative example.

1. Ours has been denominated a Church-Building Scheme; and it is when viewed according to the naked generality of this description, that it lies naked and open to the principal and most plausible objections which have been made against it. A great deal of the precipitate hostility to which we have been exposed, arises from the hasty, and, therefore, partial glimpses which men have taken of us. They have seen our object in parts only, and not in full; and thus it has been sadly misconceived, just because beheld in some of its single features, instead of being beheld completely and comprehensively. It is on purpose that men might see in full, that which hitherto they have only seen in parts, that we have drawn up the following propositions, which might be prefaced thus by this our first proposition, that we shall make a negative one. It is *not* a sufficient account of our enterprise to say of it simply and generally, that it is to build churches in those places where we judge that they are wanted.

2. We should be coming nearer to the full and proper comprehension of the enterprise, did we take into our view not only the church which we build, but the vicinity for whose good it is intended. The church is erected, not for the purpose of being

filled as it may by the attractive powers of its minister; but erected with a special and distinct reference to the Christian good of the families by whom it is surrounded. We shall never be understood, so long as the church is regarded in its naked and separate existence alone, without being regarded in the affinity which it bears to the assigned district in the midst of which it is situated. The whole peculiarity of our scheme lies in this; and, while this is kept out of sight, we shall never have done with the unintelligent crudities of those by whom we are made the objects of a perpetual misrepresentation. The church is planted for the express benefit of certain unprovided families occupying a given district that has been previously explored, and whose limits have been previously determined; and the specific thing on which we rest, and are willing to rest exclusively the merits of our cause, is the footing upon which the relation is established between this church and these families. (1.) We provide them with a church *near enough*, else they are still unprovided families. (2.) We are labouring to provide them with a church at *seat-rents low enough*, else they are obviously still unprovided families. (3.) We take care that *the district be small enough*, and its families few enough to be thoroughly pervaded by the week-day attentions of a clergyman; else in one most important respect these families would still be unprovided, because not provided with a minister who might assume the pastoral superintendence, and discharge it so fully as to become the counsellor and Christian friend of one and all of them. The

main strength of our case lies, not in ours being a new place of worship additional to the old ones that were previously in existence; but in ours being distinguished from all the others, by the new relation in which it stands to the outer field that is immediately around it, and that we have allocated for its parish. And as the church is thus appropriated to the use of its particular locality, so the duties of its minister are as much appropriated to the people within its limits—it being his specific business not to fill that church from the general neighbourhood, or from the wide and universal town, but to fill that church out of that parish. It is for the express purpose of making this a possible or likely achievement, that we enact the three conditions which we have now specified,—holding them indispensable to such a constitution of a church, as that its minister may, without stepping beyond the limits of a manageable home-walk, sustain and fully acquit himself, both of the ministerial and pastoral relation to the people of the same little vicinity. Were we sure that our reader would retain in his mind the three elements which we have now put together into one combination, then, by the means of a single word, might we convey to him the precise and characteristic object at which we aim. Instead of looking to the church in its individuality, let him look to the manner in which we propose that it shall be conjoined with the local territory in which it stands, and let him agree, because of this conjunction, to its being called a local or territorial church—then our object is not in the general to build churches, but to plant

*territorial churches* in those places where we judge that they are wanted.

3. Let us now offer a few specimens of the grounds on which we judge such a church to be wanted; and this chiefly with the view of impressing the all-important distinction between *existent* church-room, and *available* church-room. If there be not enough of existent church-room, this creates a necessity too palpable to be insisted on; but it may so happen that there is enough of existent church-room in a given parish, and yet there be localities in that parish in a state of most grievous ecclesiastical destitution. The parish church may be no territorial church to them, as when it wants the first property of such a church. It may not be near enough. The physical barrier of an impracticable distance may be interposed between them and their nearest place of worship; in which case, although there were a surplus accommodation in their own parish church, it might be of little or no avail to them. And still less would it alleviate the necessity under which they labour, to be told of the wide and general calculations by which the enemies of our cause are attempting to establish, that there is not only enough of accommodation, but a surplus of it for the whole of Scotland. Examples:—At Snizort, in Skye, there is the populous hamlet of Uigg, which, with the district surrounding it, at two miles on every side, contains a population of 700 inhabitants, at the distance of eight miles from their parish church. In Shieldag, there is the district of Kishorn, with a dense population of 600, at the distance of ten or twelve miles from

any place of worship. At Fort-William there is a population of 1600, separated from the parish church by an arm of the sea and the river Lochy, which ought to be erected into a parish. At Locharkaig there are families thirty-four miles from the parish church, and with no access to any other place of worship. At and about Lybster in Caithness, there is a population of 1500, distant four and six miles from the two nearest places of worship, both small enough for their own contiguous families. In Glenelg there is the village of Amisdale, with 900 people, and at the distance of twelve or fourteen miles from the parish church. We shall conclude this list of examples by a statement of the good done in providing for a case far less aggravated than any of them. The population of the parish of Largs in Ayrshire is about 3000. The number of sittings in the established church was 900, besides which there is a meeting-house capable of holding between 600 and 700, and occasionally a small conventicle of another denomination, who assemble we understand, in a place that could accommodate 100 people more. At all events, about two years ago, we had in this parish a stable population of about 3000, and in the establishment and dissent together, more than 1600 sittings. What cause, it might be asked, was there for any addition either to the size or number of places of worship in this particular locality? and yet there has been a recent enlargement of the parish church at Largs to the extent of 440 sittings; but this perhaps may be placed to the account of the exotic population who repair in summer to this beautiful

watering-place. But what is still more decisive, there has, over and above, been the erection, within the parish, of an altogether new church with 300 sittings, in the village of Fairley, and to which a locality of 500 people is on the eve of being assigned. Now, mark the effect of the new church there, of a more strictly local or territorial character to the people of Fairley than their old parish church was. Without taking any rigid inventory on the subject, it was quite palpable that the number who went from Fairley to Largs on the Sabbath-day did not average more than fifty; or in other words, that a very large population were left at home, to whom the inconvenient distance of three miles proved an effectual obstacle in the way of their attendance, and with whom, in consequence of this, the habit had fallen into utter desuetude. It would have been in vain to allege to these people the abundance of existent church-room, either in the Dissent or Establishment at Largs. The destitution lay, not in the want of existent, but in the want of commodious and available church-room; and this could only be supplied, not by a provision of church-room at such a distance from their habitations, but of church-room in a state of juxta-position. And certain it is, such is the efficacy of this juxta-position, since their own little church has been built in the midst of them, and still more of the presence and attentions of its residing minister;—such, in other words, is the benefit of a place of worship, combining all the properties of a territorial church, that, with a speed and suddenness truly encouraging for a similar enterprise in all similar situations, the

village has been reclaimed to the decencies of Sabbath observation. The seats are all taken and respectably filled. The peace, and let us hope, the piety of a Scottish Sabbath have superadded a moral beauty to the great natural beauties which abound in this scene of many attractions; and the general attendance throughout the year gives cheering evidence to an almost universal restoration of the habit of the good olden time among the families.*

4. But this property, of being near enough, is only one of the properties of what we have defined to be a rightly constituted local or territorial church. Yet, as being the most palpable to the senses, it is that wherewith the unintelligent and unthinking are apt to be satisfied, though the other essential qualifications should be wanting. And thus we can far more easily demonstrate to their satisfaction the necessity for new places of worship in large country parishes than their necessity in towns, where churches meet the eye in almost every direction; and in which, more especially, if there be a great deal of vacant room every Sabbath, the proof against any assertion of the ecclesiastical wants of the people is held to be absolutely conclusive. Example:—In the three Edinburgh parishes of Old Greyfriars, Lady Yester's, and Tron Church, we have a population of 10,244,

* It ought to be remarked, that the lowness of the seat-rents in this chapel could not have been secured but for the engagement of wealthy and benevolent individuals to become responsible for a stipend to the minister. This engagement, on their part, is tantamount to an endowment; and it is precisely for the purpose of multiplying this benefit, and making it permanent and universal, that a small endowment is sought from Government for all similar erections.

comprehensive of the whole Cowgate, and many other alleys beside; and for whom a provision of church-room, to the extent of little more than 5000 sittings, ought to be sufficient. But to meet this want, we can allege no less than nine places of worship, either within the limits of the territory now specified, or on its immediate confines,—for we have the three parish churches; and Brighton Street Chapel on the very margin of the locality; and the Gaelic Chapel, with the North College Street Independent Meeting-House, both at the head of the Horse Wynd, which terminates in the Cowgate; and the Cowgate Chapel; and the Original Burgher Meeting-House in Grey's Close; and the Original Seceder Meeting-House in Infirmary Street, long under the able ministrations of the venerable and learned Professor Paxton. Here, then, are nine places of worship wherewith this particular region of the town is studded; and yet, a region which has been represented as in a state of the greatest ecclesiastical destitution. The accommodation is not, we believe, overrated at 9000 sittings; and, besides such an overplus of existent church-room, it has all the benefit of the property of juxta-position to make it available. Something is wanted to explain and reconcile these things; and more especially to make folk understand how there should be such a want of church-accommodation for the families of the Cowgate, when there exists such a superabundance of that accommodation, and a great deal of it lying waste and tenantless at their very doors.

5. To help us out of this difficulty, we must

take into account the other properties of a rightly constituted territorial church, beside that of nearness or juxta-position, and see whether these two have been realized. The second general property is, that the seat-rents be low enough for the circumstances of the general population. A seat-rent higher than they can pay may be just as effectual a barrier in the way of their attendance on a given church as a distance greater than they can walk; and however numerous, and however near the places of worship may be to the families in question, still, in the proper ecclesiastical sense of the word, they are unprovided families. Example:—To keep by the territory that we have already specified, the average seat-rent of the three parish churches is about ten shillings a sitting,—obviously too high, even for a single occupier, if he be of the working classes, but amounting to an absolute interdict on their attendance in families. We have not ascertained the seat-rents of the different chapels in this locality. We have heard of such an average as seven shillings for each individual sitting,—obviously too high also. At all events, the produce of the seat-rents is the great fund out of which the annual expenses, and more especially the maintenance of the clergyman are defrayed. This must create a necessarily higher rent than the people of a plebeian district can generally afford. I should expect, in these circumstances, a smaller attendance of the lower orders on the Established Churches than on the Dissenting Meeting-Houses. As matters are at present ordered, the Dissenters will reach somewhat farther down in the scale of

society; and collect a greater number of hearers, both from among the lowest of the middle and the highest of the working classes, than the church does. But it should not at all surprise me, though the general mass of the working classes in the Cowgate and its environs were alike unreached and unpenetrated by both.

6. But there are still other phenomena to be alleged, which, without a comprehensive view of all the particulars that enter into the constitution of a territorial church, will appear to be subversive of our whole argument. There are low-rented sittings in the churches of the Establishment, which, nevertheless, remain unlet; and there are even examples alleged of free sittings, and that too in large and goodly proportion, in the chapels of the Dissenters, which nevertheless remain unoccupied. Our general solution of both these phenomena is, that, to effect a popular movement, something more is necessary than the removal of an obstacle. A movement requires an impulse, and the application of a moving or motive force, which, in this instance, is brought to bear upon the families by the missionary attentions of the clergyman; and these rendered greatly more effective, if backed by an active and zealous surveillance on the part of a well-appointed agency—whether in the shape of elders, or the teachers of local Sabbath schools. It is not enough that the church-doors be opened to the people, or that an easy and practicable access be obtained for them to the house of God, if among them there have been no previous tendency to that direction. The great secret is how to give

this tendency, a matter altogether distinct from that of taking impediments out of the way. In other words, we must do something more than provide facilities,—we must supply inducements, or put certain impellent forces into busy and aggressive operation. To abridge the distance of the church, or lower its seat-rents, is but the displacement of a barrier,—a very different thing truly from the application of a positive and efficient cause, without which nature will persist in its sluggishness and deep indifferency; and in which, after many years of neglect, we are not to wonder that whole aggregates of population are now found to be inveterately though not immovably settled. Still it is obvious, that, to overcome the long-established habit of a long and obstinate desuetude, something more is necessary than a church with the first and second properties which we have assigned as indispensable. As indispensable as either, and having itself all the efficiency in our process of restoration, is the third property of a small enough parish for the clergyman not only thoroughly to explore, but thoroughly to cultivate; and who, with the benefit of a full parochial equipment at his command, might bring all the force of that moral suasion which lies in personal converse and the unwearied kindness of his family ministrations to bear upon the householders.—Examples:—The parochial, or as it may be called, the territorial system, is completely broken up in most of our large towns; and, instead of saying that the parishes are neglected by their ministers, it were more just and candid to say that the ministers, occupied with general congregations are

dissevered from their parishes. They are not in fair circumstances for so labouring in their respective localities, as, by means of their week-day attentions, to secure the Sabbath attendance of their parochial families. And when to this is added the engrossment by others of their best and largest church accommodation—then to reproach them with the degeneracy of our plebeian families, is to treat them as so many slaves in the hands of Egyptian task-masters, required not only to make a quantity of bricks, doubly greater than is competent to human strength, but to make them without straw. It is but the mockery of an alleviation to tell them of the few low-rented sittings in each of our churches. The experiment will not be a fair one till they have the command of a whole church for a whole parish,—when they will reclaim their people in fifties much faster than, with only a few scantlings of degraded and disreputable places which must first be filled ere any thing better can be offered to them, they will reclaim them in tens or in fives. However difficult it may be to convey this truth to certain understandings, still it is demonstrable, that a minister in the former condition will find it easier to ignite the general mass of his parochial community, than, in the latter condition, to keep alive a few dying embers, or fan some rare and isolated particles of the dead and dormant heap into vitality.* And the experience of the dissenting chapels is equally instructive. Their ministers are very rarely, perhaps never, known to charge themselves over-

* For a farther explanation of this, see my Demonstration of the Evils of the Edinburgh System of Seat-letting, § 20.

head with the families of any given district. I am aware of the incompatibility between such a charge and the charge of their general congregations; and therefore to be done effectually they should limit themselves, in the first instance, to a very small section, which, in addition to their other and previous engagements, they might thoroughly overtake. If a slip of territory contiguous to one of their meeting-houses were plied by the constant attentions of its minister to all the sick and the dying and the young within its confines, accompanied by the offer of household ministrations, and of Sabbath room in a chapel at their doors, one should like to know by what reaction of attendance, on the part of the families, it would at length be followed up. To tell of the difficulties or the delicacies of such an experiment, is just to tell of the grievous incapacity under which all our voluntary chapels labour. And, accordingly, we have not met with a more instructive piece of information, than that the *Independent* Chapel in North College Street should have one-third of its sittings free, and yet that these are the least occupied.* It is only a few months ago that we obtained the survey of a district, every house of which is within a stonethrow of this chapel. It consists of that part of the Cowgate, on its south side, which lies between the Horse Wynd and the College Wynd, and of the west side of the College Wynd. There are 262 individuals in this locality, of whom 9 only are seat-holders in all places of worship, or 1 in 29 of the population.

* See the "Church its Own Enemy," by Mr Adam Black, p. 43.

Of these 9 not one has rented a sitting among the Independents. But on being made to understand that there were so many free sittings in the Independent chapel so near to them, I conceived it possible that some may have availed themselves of such a tempting opportunity. I accordingly have looked anew over the report of this district, and find that of its 74 families, all of them, whether seat-holders or not, with the exception of 11, profess that they belong to a particular denomination; and, accordingly, we are presented with families belonging to the Relief, and the Roman Catholics, and the Establishment, and the Episcopalians, and the Antiburghers, and the Seceders, and the Methodists, and lastly with one family of Independents, who, at the same time, have no seats taken in any chapel of their own persuasion, or anywhere else. They may or they may not be occupiers in the Independent chapel of College Street;* but such a state of the population, in the immediate vicinity of so many churches and meeting-houses, is to me one of the most impressive proofs which can be given for the utter inefficacy, either of a voluntary system which refuses the parochial economy, or of an Establishment which has abandoned it, to provide for the Christian education of the families of the land.

7. We may now see what the proper field is in which the statistics, the only available statistics of

* I have since learned of this family, that none of them is either a church member of, or habitual attender in the Independent Chapel in North College Street, though one of the household states that he sometimes goes to it.

the question, are to be gathered. Not, we have all along contended, by taking an inventory of the churches and their room, but by taking an inventory of the church-goers and their number. It is of no consequence to the population in the College Wynd to be told that there is enough of unoccupied space for them in the College Street Independent meeting-house. Nor are their families to be hopelessly and heartlessly abandoned, because of the bare existence and contiguity of a place of worship, whose vacant sittings only proclaim its own impotency for reclaiming the degenerate people at its door to the habits and the decencies of Christian observation. Neither do we stand acquitted of all further obligation to the families in the Cowgate, because of the nine churches within, or upon its limits; and altogether of doubly greater capacity than is enough for their accommodation. Amid all this profusion of sittings in the churches of this locality, we do not meet, in the houses of it, with 1 in 8 of their seat-holders. When told of so much apparent abundance along with so much real scarcity, the true philosopher will become all the keener in quest of a solution; and the true Christian philanthropist all the keener in quest of a remedy than before. They are the unintelligent and the heartless who will be satisfied,—the men void of intellect, or void of pity, who will cease to make farther inquiries, and leave these wretched families to themselves.

8. On this subject there is a woful and widespread delusion, and the country seems altogether to have got upon a wrong scent. Even in parliament, the single question relates to the number of

the people, and the amount of existent church-room for holding them; and if these two elements, when arranged in parallel columns, are found pretty nearly to quadrate with each other, the investigation will be held as closed; and that, too, in the face of a growing and greatly augmented heathenism all over the land. It is thus to be feared that the inquiry now set on foot,* will land in some precipitate, but withal most lame and impotent conclusion. Of what importance is it to know that fabrics with room enough exist, without seeking to know whether they be accompanied with right securities for their being replenished from the surrounding families? The question, the only question is, how are we to recover these families? and it is on this outer field that we are presented with the great arena on which the controversy between the Establishment and the Voluntary system ought to be settled. When told of a voluntary church, with half its sittings unoccupied, and of the territory around it, with seven-eighths of its people going nowhere—these two phenomena, so far from being irreconcilable, co-exist in perfect harmony, and reflect the utmost light and explanation on each other. The very reason why we behold no effect from the contiguity of the chapel on the habits of the householders, is, that, in reference to them, the chapel is wholly non-effective. But this, though the very best reason why no good from this one expedient has yet been done to the families, is the very worst

* For Returns from all places in Scotland, on the motion of Mr Wallace, respecting the amount of Church Accommodation in the Establishment and among the Dissenters.

why no good, from another expedient, should be attempted in their favour. I should hold it a strange objection against some one way of benefiting a population, that some other way had been tried, and turned out to be abortive. The chapel whose minister never looks near the households of a particular locality, may have been of no service to it; but that is no reason why the church or chapel, whose great and specific business is to reclaim the occupiers of these households to the proprieties of religious observation, might not be the instrument of best and highest service to it that can be performed in behalf of any population. I know not whether I have been more revolted by the insensibility, or amazed by the utter absurdity of this voluntary argument. They summon one of their chapels into the argument against us; and, as if glorying in its impotency, tell us that enough, and more than enough, has been done for the families which are around it—seeing that there is plenty of room for them all in the seats of their half-unoccupied fabric. The reply to this is, that our chapel is not to be as their chapel, but wholly distinct from theirs, because of a peculiarity annexed to it; and the peculiarity is this—that, whereas their minister is resorted to on the Sabbath by families from all quarters who seek after him if they will, the special business of our minister is to seek after the families of one quarter, and that, in the first instance, whether they will or they will not—sure, at the same time to find, in the second, and in every succeeding instance, a warm and general welcome at almost every door. Because

one kind of effort has been made, and been utterly fruitless of good to the outcast inhabitants of a given locality, is that a reason why not one other effort, though of a wholly different kind, shall be made to seek and to save them? Because a certain economy has been set up at the head of the Horse Wynd, and failed of benefit to the next-door families, must we, therefore, be restrained from setting up another, and an altogether distinct economy, at the foot of the Horse Wynd, whose main design shall be to bear with the most powerful and salutary appliances which can be thought of on one and all of that sorely neglected population? Surely the inference is not a logical or a fair one, that the agency which lays itself out for the good of a particular district, can be of no benefit to its residenters, because another agency has been of no such benefit, who never so laid themselves out, perhaps never thought of it. It is by the influence of a vicious syllogism on a perverse understanding, that the Horse Wynd chapel has been made to stand in the way of the Cowgate church. For ours would have been a wholly different sort of engine from theirs—theirs a general chapel, ours a territorial one.

9. By the way, we, the advocates for the extension of the church, or as we have been termed, patrons of the church-building scheme, have been reviled and ridiculed for our faith in mere architecture, as if on the strength of masonry and carpentry alone we expected to regenerate the population. Now truly, our faith is not in the architecture, but, under God, in the living agency which we propose

to associate therewith. For the diffusion of grace and saving knowledge among the people, we no more count upon the house called a church, than we look for light from a candlestick; yet a well-placed candlestick and a well-placed church are both of importance notwithstanding, the one for physical, the other for moral and spiritual illumination.* But so little is it our rage to build new churches, that we would quite as readily, in fit and proper circumstances, buy old ones. And so little is it the new architecture which is the object of our faith, that our faith would be quite as strong in the old architecture, were we only at liberty to establish a strict local relationship between any chapel we might thus buy, and the district chalked out for it, and invest it with all the properties, first, second, and third, of a territorial church.† Our faith is not in the sufficiency of any new and yet untried architecture of ours, which might hereafter spring into existence. But when our opponents object to our scheme the multitude of their chapels, and by a strange sort of Irishism think their objection all the stronger when they can further allege the number of their unlet sittings—we might well retort that their faith truly is in the sufficiency of old architecture, which has been tried, and found wanting.

10. The true way of proceeding, then, is to ascertain the amount of this want, and in the discovery of its causes to make the discovery of its

* In the book of Revelation, the extinction of a church is figured by the removal of a candlestick.

† See § 2.

cure. We have already heard enough of pews occupied and unoccupied; let us now learn the number of the people, church-going and non-church-going. If we make out that in every place throughout the land where the people have multiplied beyond the original provisions of our Establishment, there the majority of the surplus population, especially if of the labouring classes, go nowhere—it is no comfort, no alleviation of this melancholy state that the Dissenters should step in and tell us of the number of their chapels, and the great amount of their accommodation. This is only telling us of the greatness of their impotency, and that their whole system, indeed, is one magnificent abortion. If, notwithstanding their ten or twenty thousand alleged sittings, and which they have power to multiply at pleasure, we find that in every place where the boast is made there are ten or twenty thousand families in a state of heathenism that withstands all their efforts, and, so far from giving way, is gaining new strength and magnitude every year; the conclusion is irresistible, and, instead of being extenuated, is enhanced, and made all the more emphatic, when told of their great architectural performances—even the conclusion that a grievous incapacity exists somewhere; and they have clearly made it out against themselves that they are not the people from whom the remedy is to come. The truth is, and if we but advert to it, it will go far to nullify the effect of their deceptive representations, the statistics upon this subject have all been carried on in the wrong quarter, or at least they must be transferred

to another quarter, ere we shall have obtained the essential materials of the question at issue. We have yet heard of nothing but seats and seat-holders; but the information we need is of houses and householders. The thing to be ascertained is, whether we have yet arrived at a system of moral education that is comprehensive of all the people. The straight-forward way, surely, of going about this inquiry is to make entry and reckoning among the people themselves. To ascertain the state of the people, we should go among the people. It is now high time to transfer our survey from the church to the outer field; and instead of thinking that we have completed our investigation by taking account of the sittings in churches and meeting-houses, the far more practically important object is to take account of the number of sitters among the families that surround them. Example: In the Water of Leith and its annexed district, there are about 600 sittings wanted for the supply of its families, and this number may be taken to represent the ecclesiastical destitution of that locality—a destitution in consequence of which a population of very nearly 1200, as far as concerns the habits and opportunities of Christian education, are in a state of unprovidedness. Within a few hundred yards of them, there was built a few years ago, the large chapel of Stockbridge, belonging to the Establishment, with room for 1500 sitters; and this, it were natural to imagine, might have proved an important accommodation to the families in question. But the chapel is upheld by seat-rents; and drawing its hearers from all distances and

directions, it but operates superficially, far and wide, over the town and suburbs at large; and so with a full congregation from the upper and middle classes, its influence is wholly unfelt by the lower orders, even of its own immediate vicinity. And accordingly of the 140 sitters in the Water of Leith district, there are only 7 who attend at Stockbridge. But over and above this, there has been raised still more recently a dissenting chapel, nearer by half the distance, to the Water of Leith, and where it is understood that a goodly number of unoccupied seats is waiting to be looked after by the unprovided families. But beside that the seat-rents of the Dissenters, charged as they are with the maintenance of the clergyman and the expenses of their chapel, are higher than those of the Establishment ought to be, there is another most important element which is strangely overlooked in this whole argument; and that is the *vis inertiæ*, the sluggishness or obstinate indisposition of a people with whom the habit of church-going has fallen into desuetude. When told that nothing is necessary to be done, because of the amount of church-room which Dissenters have supplied, it seems the conception that we have but to summon places of worship into being, and then all men will flow into them. Why then did the unprovided families in the Water of Leith not look after the church-room that is within a few stonethrows of their own habitations? Putting the high seat-rents out of sight, a very sufficient reason is, that before they will look after church-room, the minister who has that room to dispose of, must first look after them.

They will in no other way be aroused from that inveterate apathy which now cleaves to them; and as if by a physical necessity, like that of gravitation, fixes them in a state of quiescence, which, unless by dint of far more vigorous appliances than the mere spectacle of an empty church or meeting-house in their vicinity, will remain unaltered and unalterable. It is not by an attractive, but by an aggressive influence that these people will ever be reclaimed; and it is only by the week-day assiduities of a clergyman, charged with a special territory, and confining himself within its limits, that such an influence can be brought effectually to bear upon them. Now this is what Dissenters fail, in the general, to do. They build, and overbuild, so as not only to meet the existing demand, but greatly to overpass it; and then tell us of their number of empty sittings, in the shape of an argument, that to do aught more for the accommodation of the people is quite unnecessary. In other words, the process is to stop when the demand stops. The amount of moral education to be provided for is to be limited, not by the necessities of the people, but by the desires of the people. When they cease to care for Christianity, we are to cease caring for them. Because the 140 church-goers in the Water of Leith have an abundance, nay a great superabundance of church-room, therefore we are acquitted of all farther obligation to the 600 who have seats for the taking, but wont take them. Their taste and their demand for the ministrations of Christianity are now asleep; and the mere existence of vacant church-room in their

neighbourhood is to be held as a sufficient reason for letting them alone. We should reckon it the noblest of all studies, because, having for its object the greatest of all achievements, and for its principle the highest and holiest aim that ever inspired the heart of either philanthropist or patriot—the study of those peculiar tactics by which the stubborn apathy of every neglected population might best be assailed, and their now extinct affections for goodness be again awakened through the families. But no—all this must stand in abeyance till the Dissenters have got their pews filled; and so till that which letteth, even the formidable argument of their half-attended meeting-houses, is taken out of the way. Or, in other words, the population must be left to accumulate in neglected thousands, and their corruption to spread and deepen into greater inveteracy every year, because our friends the Voluntaries have calculated too sanguinely on the power of their own favourite principle; and are now learning, to their own sad experience, that it is a possible thing to build more places of worship than they, all at once, can find a willingness in the people to fill them. But this willingness never comes of its own accord; nor need we look for its revival, but by the incessant appliance from without of such personal and household attentions to the people of a given district as the minister of a territorial establishment can best bring to bear upon its families. And must there be no such forth-going among the dead, till they, somehow or other, of themselves come to life again? Or is it any reason for abstaining from

this enterprise, that Dissenters can allege how many are the superfluous meeting-houses which they have unadvisedly built, and how much of superfluous carpentry is to be found within the walls of each of them? In the mighty aggregate of plebeian households far beneath the reach of their operation, which is very much confined in towns to the upper and middle strata of society, there exists a mine of immense capabilities upon which they never enter, and by the right working of which a vast addition might be made to the stock of national virtue, to the moral wealth of our land. Are we to forego this, I would ask, and satisfy ourselves, instead, with a "beggarly account of empty boxes;" and till this hopeless vacancy is filled, must every attempt to recall our people from the moral degradation into which they have fallen, be in the mean time suspended?

11. On the principles which we now urge, then, it will be found, in all our large towns more especially, that there exists an immense necessity for new churches; and, if not new in architecture, at least new in character, and more particularly in the local or territorial relation which they should hold in their several vicinities. The extent of this necessity is only to be ascertained by household surveys, in the results of which the great strength of our case lies. Of these we have given about fifty specimens in the appendix, and we entreat the attention of our readers to the observations by which they are followed up, and by which we trust that certain questions of jealousy between Churchmen and Dissenters are satisfactorily disposed of. The

latter have blamed us because we speak only of our own Church Accommodation, and say nothing of theirs.* There is an obvious reason why we cannot speak so minutely and statistically of theirs as we can of our own; but the truth is, that one table containing the accommodation within the Establishment, and another table, containing the amount of seats taken by the people *in all places of worship, of all denominations*—these two tables, once they were completed, for every place in a state of real ecclesiastical destitution, would present

* In their commentary upon one of our Circulars, they seem not to have been aware of a previous one, issued months before, the object of which was to obtain the fullest information respecting the ecclesiastical state of the people of Scotland, inclusive of all that had been done both by the Church and by Dissenters, and also what was left undone by both. Instead of which communication, they have lighted upon another, possessing a very subordinate character, and designed for a special and temporary service; and on this they have bestowed their exclusive consideration. In virtue of this ludicrous mistake, they have been like men who try to estimate the character and design of a correspondence, from the examination of a single letter; and that not a full, and formal, and explicit letter sent to the party with whom the negotiation is held, but a private and incidental communication sent to one's own friends, and between whom there is many a topic, the mention of which were but the idle repetition of a thing long and fully understood amongst them. Accordingly we have been accused of wilful concealment of the truth, not because in any of our communications with Government we have suppressed the fact that there are Dissenting places of worship in our country; but because we have suppressed that fact in one of our communications to the ministers of the church of Scotland—and that too, not many weeks after we had, by a prior communication asked them to inform us of the whole accommodation for public worship, both with themselves and among Dissenters, in their respective parishes. I certainly have no recollection of the public mind having, in many quarters, been so grossly deceived into a total misunderstanding of any subject, as of the real character and design of our proceedings; and of such a hideous outcry, in consequence, having been raised for nothing.

us with all the attainable, and at the same time relevant statistics of the question. The second table would exhibit the amount of what had been done by the Establishment and Dissenters, and the fearful amount, in very many places, of what had been left undone. The first table would exhibit how much church-room the Establishment had at its command; and, if any of that room was still unoccupied, then by wresting it from the grasp of Town-Councils, with their high rents and indiscriminate seat-lettings, there might, by the restoration of a territorial character to our Town Churches, be so much of the deficiency exhibited in the second table provided for. The remainder can only be met by new territorial churches—whether this shall be accomplished by architecturally new erections, or by old meeting-houses turned into this new destination. Our great and terminating object is not to supplant the Dissenters, but to supply the out-field population whom neither they nor we have overtaken. It is on the magnitude of that population that our plea of necessity is founded. It ought to be acknowledged, with all thankfulness and respect, that in virtue of what Dissenters have done, the extent of this unprovided population is considerably less than what it otherwise would have been. I can truly say that, if I found the Dissenters able to occupy the whole ground that we had not entered on, I would not only never have stirred in this enterprise; but would have willingly given up every argument I have used, on the side of a national provision for the clergy, or of the endowment of churches by the state. It is on this, and this alone

in fact, that our plea for an Establishment, and a sufficiently extended one, is founded—on the moral and spiritual desolation of all remoter hamlets and villages in large country parishes, on the outcast thousands and tens of thousands in large towns—only to be assailed by the territorial methods of an Establishment, and by the aggressive forces which belong to it.

12. Detach from a place of worship any one of the three properties which are essential to its being a territorial church, and you may thereby reduce the families of a whole neighbourhood to a state of extreme ecclesiastical destitution—as the population of Amisdale in Glenelg, because, though they have a parish church, they have not a church near enough; and the population of the Grassmarket in Edinburgh, because, though they have a parish church, its seat-rents are not low enough; and the population of the Cowgate, because, though they have a chapel in their vicinity, with a large proportion of free sittings, they have not the minister of that chapel for their pastoral superintendent. Each property, if our scheme is to be carried into effect, will be a separate contribution from three several quarters. The rightly-placed church will be built, or bought from the funds raised by subscription. The low seat-rents will be the fruit of a small endowment provided by the Government, enabling the minister to live without bearing hard on the means of his hearers. The small enough parish will be chalked out by the Presbytery—to which we must add the conscientious diligence of the minister, stimulated by the vigilant guardianship

of his ecclesiastical superiors, who shall have assigned to him the peculiar task of reclaiming a waste and long-neglected territory, and who should require at his hand the proper and peculiar activity suited for such an undertaking. His, in fact, is the work of a devoted missionary; and we abjure all faith, even in the goodliest and best devised economy which can possibly be instituted, unless wielded by the power and directed by the piety of living men. And to ascend one step higher in this progression of cause and effect, we as utterly despair of any harvest from all our terrestrial arrangements, as we should of a prosperous return from the most skilful husbandry in the absence of showers and of sunshine—if the Spirit of God shall be withheld, and living water from the sanctuary above is not to descend upon us. Let us not forget that, however indispensable the things for which we plead, they are, after all, but "the outward things of the house of God,"*—most important no doubt, as being the aqueducts for a diffusive and general conveyance of spiritual blessings; yet a vain and useless parade, if the grace only given to those who ask it, shall not light upon our tabernacles. With all our value for the mechanism of a well-ordered church, we must remember that its great mainsprings are in the hands of Him who casteth down the imaginations of the confident, and delights in lending Himself to the supplications of the humble, —so that, whatever glory may accrue from the wisdom of its rulers, it is in its men of faith and of

* Nehemiah xi. 16.

prayer that the main strength of our Establishment lies.

13. We now feel ourselves exempted from the necessity of any further notice of the Statement issued by the Central Board of Dissenters. Of their wish to fasten the charge of dishonesty on ourselves, we say not one word. Neither shall we try, what indeed we should feel a difficult task, the adequate expression of our outraged feelings at the violence done by them to all common and all Christian humanity, in their wretched attempt to cut down the supply of religious instructors for the poor, and so utterly to traverse the spirit of our merciful Saviour's behest,—"the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more labourers unto the harvest."* Their grotesque calculations do not need to be grappled with in detail, for they proceed throughout on a notion that is fundamentally erroneous, and fatal to their whole reasoning. They seem to have imagined that what we want is a sort of hap-hazard and simultaneous extension of our church, whereby it was suddenly to be enlarged to nearly double the extent of its

* On both the topics to which we have now adverted, see Dr Macfarlan's Letter to the people of Scotland, and a most eloquent utterance of just and noble indignancy in Mr Clason's first Letter to Bailie M'Laren. I take the opportunity also of recommending to general perusal two anonymous pamphlets; the one of them entitled, "Exposure of the False Principles in the Statement of the Central Board,"—clear, convincing, and dispassionate; the other, "The Case of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," against that Statement. Why did the Author of the last-mentioned able and conclusive reasoning not give his influential name to a publication that does him so much honour?

present establishment,—and this with a sort of blind impetuosity that regarded not in every special instance the calls and the claims on which every distinct application was founded. We expect no endowment for any one church, without the full and satisfying demonstration in that, and every other individual case, of the real and practical necessity which exists for such a provision. It is not by simultaneous, but by successive additions, that we desire to meet the deficiencies of our Establishment; and we most willingly concede it to our jealous adversaries, that, if they can demonstrate of any given locality in whose behalf the application is preferred, that they have done full justice to that surplus population whom the Establishment in its present stinted condition is not able to overtake, then, in reference to that locality, they shall have stripped us of our plea. It is not by bewildering generalities that this controversy is to be determined, but by coming to close quarters in particular instances. We shall want a church for Lybster in Caithness; will the Dissenters tell us what they have done there to nullify our application; or, should Government hold themselves acquitted of this populous village by the proofs which have been exhibited of a surplus accommodation a hundred miles off from them? We urgently require a low-rented church at Greenside, of St Andrew's parish in Edinburgh. Is it enough to tell us of the costly and unlet seats in its Established place of worship, or even of the universally free sittings in a Baptist chapel within the district, when, as a proof that neither the one nor the other doth avail the famlies,

we find, of the vast majority, that these Sabbath sanctuaries are unvisited, and almost unknown by them?—In the Cowgate of Edinburgh alone, we can point to thousands who never enter the house of God; and must we be thwarted there too, in our attempts to provide a territorial church for them, because of the mockery of relief held out by nine useless elevations which already exist in their neighbourhood,—we mean useless to these unreached families, or rather so many moral nuisances in their way, when converted, as they are, into hostile arguments against the only effectual system for their Christian education? It is thus, by going piece-meal to work, that we shall attempt to make out a special provision for each case of special but thoroughly ascertained necessity; and we hope it will quiet the alarms and soften the resistance of our adversaries, when made to understand by how very gradual, how very laborious, how very expensive a process, not to the Government who shall partially endow, but to ourselves who shall wholly build, the necessary churches,—we expect to arrive, through much of calumny and opposition, and by dint of many sacrifices, at the consummation of our wishes.

14. It will perhaps make this matter still clearer, if I now present the literal reply, written by myself, to an official member of the late Government, who inquired at me, whether the proposed extension for the Church of Scotland should be a gradual or an immediate one.—"The following are my reasons for holding it more eligible that the church shall be extended by a gradual, rather than by the immediate

erection and endowment of a certain definite and specified number of places of worship.—(1.) It allows time for a deliberate and well-weighed comparison of the different applications which will be made from all parts of the country, and better secures the selection of the fittest places for a new church. (2.) It gives better security for the deficiencies of the Establishment being at length *fully* repaired—whereas the enactment of a definite number will fall greatly short of the work, as in the example of the late Government churches for the Highlands, which, though of immense benefit *pro tanto*, and as far as they go, form so small a proportion to the whole necessities of the case, as to have turned out a very partial and inadequate remedy. (3.) It allows time for a preparation, the necessity of which is apt to be overlooked by those who take a superficial or sanguine view of the whole subject. It is a great mistake to imagine, that, on the erection of a new church, and the appointment of its minister, in the midst of many thousands of people who at present go nowhere, there will be a precipitate rush to fill the place which has thus been provided for them. The truth is, that the work of reclaiming such an exile and outlandish population to the habit of church-going, is a work of great sluggishness; and not to be accomplished but at the expense of much labour and devotedness on the part of a faithful ecclesiastic, who must give himself, and with the spirit of an old apostle or a modern missionary, to the business of going forth among the families, and, by his week-day attentions to them, creating such a demand

and desire among them as may at length lead to their Sabbath attendance upon him. The truth is, I should feel apprehensive that if the material apparatus of new churches were greatly to outrun such a preparation, we should be so exposed to the mortifying spectacle of desolate and empty pews, as might stamp a mockery upon the whole enterprise. There is much the same work to be gone through, in our towns especially, that has to be gone through on the first conversion of a pagan land to Christianity—where there must be a great missionary work ere there can be an establishment at all; and so there must be such a work among our surplus population, by means of what may be termed a Great Home Mission, ere we shall be able to obtain a footing among them for those new churches, by which we propose to extend the establishment that already exists. This Home Mission has begun and is proceeding piece-meal with its operations in various parts of the country, generally under the cognizance and with the consent of the parish clergyman, in cities and large country parishes. I could name between fifty and a hundred such that might be in readiness for new erections in the course of a few months. I have one under my own eye that commenced at Martinmas 1833, and is now in full readiness. The process, though a most essential, would, with the encouragement of Government aid in reserve, be a very rapid one; so that I should not despair of being ripe for at least a hundred new erections in three years, of double that number in less than ten years, and perhaps of the whole being completed

in the course of twenty or thirty years at farthest." Example:—They who are acquainted with the topography of Edinburgh, will follow my description of the limits which bound a particular locality in St Cuthbert's, that, I believe, has not yet been assigned to a chapel, and would, I think, do admirably for a new parish—having South College Street and Lothian Street for its northern boundary; and for its east and west boundaries Nicolson and Bristo Street; and these latter boundaries, carried as far south as when connected at their southern extremities, might enclose a population of certainly not more than 3000, and coming as nearly down to 2000 as possible. We believe that this parish would include no less than four places of worship, those of College Street Relief, Bristo Street and Poter-row United Secession, and the Methodist Chapel in Nicolson Square,—any one of which would do exceedingly well for the parish church, could we only obtain the consent of its minister to become the parish clergyman. But in default of this, there was an offer made to me lately of the Brighton Street Chapel, which is now for sale, and is exceedingly well-placed for the parish as we have now designed it—but which offer I declined. My reasons for this will illustrate the very gradual and sure way in which we propose going to work. In the first place, the ecclesiastical state of that parish has not yet been surveyed—though I have the strong apprehension, that, notwithstanding the four chapels now specified, within its limits, and the able ministers who serve in them, a vast majority of the people who ought

to be church-goers, are neither the members of any christian community, nor yet the regular attendants upon any place of worship. But if we found it otherwise, and particularly that the meeting-houses which already exist in that neighbourhood had engrossed a large proportion of the families, we should certainly prefer a more destitute locality, for the enterprise of a territorial erection in the midst of it. But what is more, we have not only not surveyed, but we have not yet entered even on the rudimental cultivation of that district. I am not aware of any parish missionaries being at work in that quarter; and, at all events, I should not hold it wise to rush precipitately on the formation of a parish church, till a preaching station, upheld by household assiduities, had been tried and found to be successful. Such a preaching station is the germ of the future church, as the missionary is of the future clergyman; but not till the germ had so far germinated, would we venture on a full parochial apparatus for any locality whatever. We should not like to hazard the money of our subscribers on an uncertain enterprise; and this careful, this studied protection of them, from the expense of useless architecture, is the sure guarantee of a like protection to Government from the expense of any useless endowment. I trust every fair and candid reader will acknowledge that in proceeding on such grounds as these, we discover no hostile feeling whatever to other denominations. Our single object is not to supplant the dissenters, but to supply the destitute; and never shall we intrude with rash footsteps on any locality, where the Establishment

on the one hand, and the evangelical Dissenters of Scotland on the other, are found to have provided efficiently and fully betwixt them for the religious instruction of its people.

15. If, instead of a short statement, my time had permitted a full one of the question now treated, there are certain other topics which I should have been glad to discuss, but which at present I must postpone. Let me briefly announce one of these, the one on which I most regret that I cannot now expatiate. We are reproached for soliciting the aid of Government to uphold the peculiarities of a sect; this is not our object. We solicit the aid of Government to carry a scheme into effect for the christian education of now unprovided thousands, whom neither we nor all the sectaries of Scotland have at present the means of overtaking; and should we be successful, I venture to say, that the peculiarities of the Church of Scotland will not constitute a millionth part of the education consequently given. The truth is, there is not the difference of a hair's-breadth between the theology of the Scottish Church, and that of nine-tenths of the Dissenters in Scotland. What we should teach is just what themselves would allow to be the Christian religion; and, instead of us petitioning Government for the support of our sectarianism, the true state of the case is, that they are preventing Government from a measure of the highest patriotism, by thrusting forward their sectarianism in the way of those territorial churches without which the general instruction of the working classes never has been overtaken, and never will. How

much happier and healthier a process, I ask, would it be, if, on Government ordaining a prospective endowment, the Dissenting ministers would harmonize with a reforming church, becoming every day more accessible and more willing to receive them. There is room in the exigencies of our increased population for many more churches than all their meeting-houses could afford, for many more parishes than all their pastors could occupy. What a beautiful and noble result, were this wretched squabble of Voluntaryism terminated; and the combatants, dropping their peculiarities, were to join their forces in one grand movement against the irreligion and wickedness of the people. We shall not despair of such a consummation. The asperities of that warfare which now rages on every side of us are surely not to last for ever. Peace and charity, let us hope, will in time be lords of the ascendant; and the storm which now darkens and disturbs our moral atmosphere, we trust shall purify, but not destroy.

# APPENDIX.

## RESULTS OF STATISTICAL SURVEYS

TAKEN

## IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS, ESPECIALLY OF TOWNS,

FOR THE

## PURPOSE OF ASCERTAINING

THE

## ECCLESIASTICAL STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

N.B.—*The sittings rented include the places of worship in all denominations.*

| | Population. | Sittings. | Proportion. | Authority. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EDINBURGH WITHIN THE ROYALTY. | | | | |
| 1. Tolbooth Parish . | 3256 | 450 | less than 1 in 7 | Rev. Mr Marshall. |
| 2. A District in the same Parish, from the Castle to No. 529, High Street, on the north side of the Castle Hill . . . | 418 | 59 | less than 1 in 7 | Rev. John Thomson, and Mr Andrew Bonar |
| 3. A District in the Grassmarket . . . | 418 | 19 | 1 in 22 | Rev. Mr Wilkie |
| 4. A larger section of the same . . . | 1348 | 89 | less than 1 in 13 | Rev. D. Mitchell |
| 5. An eastern and better part of the Cowgate | 420 | 74 | less than 1 in 5 | Dr Abercrombie |
| 6. A westerly and worse part of the Cowgate, comprehending the district from Alison's Close to Old Fishmarket Close | 865 | 96 | 1 in 9 | Rev. W. B. Clark |
| 7. First District of Old Greyfriars . . | 624 | 68 | less than 1 in 9 | Rev. D. Mitchell |
| 8. A District of the New North Parish . . | 620 | 40 | less than 1 in 15 | Rev. Mr Bruce |
| N.B. The present New North Parish . . | 810 | 132 | less than 1 in 6 | Rev. Mr Waddell |
| 9. College Parish . | 3300 | 418 | 1 in 8 | Rev. Mr Cunningham |

*Continued.*

| | Population. | Sittings. | Proportion. | Authority. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EDINBURGH WITHIN THE ROYALTY. | | | | |
| 10. North side of the Cowgate, Old Greyfriars, from the bottom of the Old Fishmarket Close to the bottom of Blair Street | 297 | 28 | less than 1 in 10 | Rev. W. B. Clark |
| 11. South side of the Cowgate, from the Horse Wynd to the College Wynd, and west side of the College Wynd . | 268 | 9 | less than 1 in 29 | Rev. W. B. Clark |
| 12. South Bridge from the Tron Church to the Cowgate, Blair Street east side, and Niddry street west side . . . | 193 | 77 | nearly 1 in 2½ | Rev. James Cochrane |
| 13. Niddry Street, east side | 52 | 12 | less than 1 in 4 | Do. Do. |
| 14. Dickson's Close . | 260 | 25 | nearly 1 in 10 | Do. Do. |
| 15. Cant's and Strichen's Closes . . . | 201 | 37 | nearly 1 in 5½ | Do. Do. |
| 16. Blackfriars Wind | 643 | 57 | less than 1 in 11 | Rev. W. Grant |
| 17. Toddrick's Wynd, Murdoch's Close, and Skinner's Close . . | 658 | 54 | less than 1 in 12 | Rev. T. Munro |
| 18. Foulis Close . | 210 | 10 | 1 in 21 | Rev. J. Cochrane, and Rev. W. Grant |
| 19. Hindford's Close and Fountain Close . | 286 | 36 | nearly 1 in 8 | Do. Do. |
| 20. Tweeddale Court, part of High Street, and World's End Close . | 121 | 31 | nearly 1 in 4 | Do. Do. |
| 21. Tron Church Parish | 2624 | 341 | nearly 1 in 7⅔ | Do. Do. |
| CANONGATE. | | | | |
| 22. Large Section of Leith Wynd Parish . . | 600 | 46 | 1 in 13 | Rev. Wm. Simpson |
| 23. Remainder of this Parish . . . . . | 1500 | 188 | 1 in 8 | Do. Do. |
| 24. Smaller Section of this Parish . . . | 134 | 10 | less than 1 in 13 | Rev. D. Mitchell |
| 25. District extending from Seaton's Close, No. 265, to Mid Common Close, including Riddle's Close, being partly in New Street Parish, and partly in Leith Wynd Parish | 346 | 47 | less than 1 in 7 | Mr Alexander N. Somerville and Mr R. M. M'Cheyne, Students of Divinity |
| 26. Near the foot of the Canongate, on the south side, in Reid's and Strathie's Closes, and the houses interjacent, fronting Canongate Street | 160 | 12 | less than 1 in 13 | Mr R. M'Gill, Student of Divinity |
| 27. Near the foot of Canongate, on the south side, in Valence's Entry and Cumming's Close, and the interjacent houses, fronting Canongate Street . | 102 | | less than 1 in 12 | Do. Do. |

*Continued.*

| | Population. | Sittings. | Proportion. | Authority. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. Bull's Close, Canongate | 103 | 4 | less than 1 in 25 | Mr Archibald L. Mac-Criric, Student of Divinity |
| ST CUTHBERTS. | | | | |
| 29. Water of Leith and Dean Village . . | 1356 | 143 | less than 1 in 9 | Rev. Mr Hay |
| SOUTH LEITH. | | | | |
| 30. A Plebeian District in the Parish of St John's | 480 | 52 | less than 1 in 9 | Rev. Mr Lewis |
| 31. A District in the same Parish, inhabited by a better class of artisans | 482 | 135 | less than 1 in 3½ | Do. |
| KILMARNOCK. | | | | |
| 32. One Street in the very heart of the Town . | 636 | 66 | less than 1 in 9 | Rev. D. Strong |
| MAXWELTON. | | | | |
| 33. An average district of it | 440 | 84 | less than 1 in 5 | Rev. James Ranken |
| DUMFRIES. | | | | |
| 34. Part of St Michael's Parish . . . | 424 | 99 | less than 1 in 4 | Mr James Spalding, jun. |
| HAWICK. | | | | |
| 35. One district . . | 60 | 1 | 1 in 60 | Rev. Mr Wallace |
| 36. Another district . | 49 | 2 | less than 1 in 24 | Do. |
| 37. A third district . | 45 | 4 | less than 1 in 11 | Do. |
| 38. The whole town . | 4412 | 1239 | about 1 in 3,7-12 | Do. |
| GLASGOW. | | | | |
| 39. Blackfriars Parish, 2d Proportion* . . | 396 | 30 | less than 1 in 13 | Rev. James Gibson |
| 40. 6th Proportion . | 478 | 35 | less than 1 in 13 | Do. |
| 41. 7th Proportion . | 369 | 35 | less than 1 in 10 | Do. |
| 42. 10th Proportion . | 426 | 44 | less than 1 in 9 | Do. |
| 43. 11th Proportion . | 270 | 21 | less than 1 in 12 | Do. |
| 44. 12th Proportion . | 555 | 45 | less than 1 in 12 | Do. |
| 45. 14th Proportion . | 214 | 32 | less than 1 in 6 | Do. |
| 46. Whole Parish | 6435 | 1313 | somewhat more than 1 in 5 | Do. |
| OBAN. | | | | |
| 47. Its poorest district | 825 | 270 | less than 1 in 3 | Rev. Alex. Mackenzie |
| 48. The church-going population in the remote extremities of Moulin parish is to the whole population as . . | ... | ... | 1 to 4 | Rev. Duncan Campbell |
| 49. In the town of Strathaven, of nearly 4000 people, only 24 have a legal title to sittings in the parish church . | ... | ... | ... | Rev. Wm. Proudfoot |

* In Glasgow each parochial district in charge of an elder is termed a Proportion.

From this table we may perceive the amount of contribution made by the Establishment and by Dissenters respectively, to the amount of Christian

education in any given district. For example, in Reid's close, (26), and district (27,) there is a population of 262 with 20 sittings, or less than 1 in 13 upon the whole. Of these 7 belong to the Establishment, and 13 to the Dissenters. Take away the dissenting seat-holders, and the proportion is reduced to 1 in 37. By proceeding, in like manner, with other districts, we find that in the Cowgate specimen, (6,) where the proportion is 1 in 9, there are 22 seat-holders belonging to the Establishment, and 72 to the Dissenters. Take off the dissenting seat-holders, and the proportion is less than 1 in 39. In the Water of Leith the proportion is less than 1 in 9 ; apart from Dissenters, it would be less than 1 in 19. In the Old Greyfriars district (11,) where the proportion is 1 in 29 ; but for Dissenters, it would have been 1 in 268. In the Canongate district (25,) where the proportion is less than 1 in 7 ; but for the dissenting seat-holders the proportion would have been less than 1 in 20. In the Old Greyfriars district (7,) where the proportion is less than 1 in 9 ; take away the dissenting seat-holders, and it is reduced to 1 in 25. In the Tolbooth specimen (2,) where the proportion is less than 1 in 7 ; take away the Dissenters, and it becomes 1 in 14. In Bull's close (28,) where the proportion is less than 1 in 25 ; but for the Dissenters, there would have been no sittings whatever, and this district of 103 people would, in respect of church-going, have been an entire moral desert. In Dickson's close, and Cant's close, (14, 15,) the proportion is less than 1 in 8, and but for the Dissenters, it would have

been 1 in 37. In Blackfriars wynd, (16,) the proportion is less than 1 in 11, and but for the Dissenters, it would have been less than 1 in 64. In Toddrick's wynd, Murdoch's close, and Skinner's close, (17,) the proportion is less than 1 in 12; without the Dissenters, it is less than 1 in 34. In Fountain close, and Foulis close, (18, 19), the proportion is less than 1 in 16; and without the Dissenters, would be 1 in 38. In the whole of the Tron church parish, (21,) the proportion is 1 in $7\frac{2}{3}$; without the Dissenters, it would have been less than 1 in $23\frac{1}{2}$. In the parish of Blackfriars, (46,) Glasgow, the whole population is 6435; the whole number of seat-holders is 1313, being 1 in $4\frac{2}{3}$. Of these seat-holders 711 belong to the Establishment, and 602 to the Dissenters; take off the Dissenters, and the proportion of seat-holders will be reduced to less than 1 in 9. Lastly, in the town of Hawick (38,) there are 4412 people, and 1239 seat-holders, being 1 in $3\frac{7}{12}$; the number of seat-holders belonging to the Establishment is 650, to the Dissenters 589. But for the Dissenters the proportion of seat-holders in this town would have been only a little more than 1 in 7.

So much for the respective shares which the Establishment and Dissent contribute to the Christian education of the people in these surveyed districts. Throughout a large proportion of our land, the Establishment have it all to themselves; and throughout the vast majority of our parishes, theirs is far the greater amount both of accommodation and of actual attendance. It is precisely in such places as we have now exhibited, that we

should expect the attendance on Dissenters to predominate—where either the parishes are greatly too populous for the churches, or where the seat-rents of the Establishment have been made as in Edinburgh to surpass the seat-rents of Meeting houses; and much therefore are we indebted to the Dissenters for the great and important supplement which they have made to all that has been done by the Establishment. But a far more interesting question than the proportion of Christian service which each has rendered to the country, is the manner in which we should proceed to do the work that has been left undone by both; to occupy that immense outfield which at present is demonstrably beyond the reach of both; and which neither our limited Establishment on the one hand, nor an unlimited, at least unfettered Voluntary system on the other, has been able to overtake. To recur to the preceding examples: Because in 26, 27, the Establishment and Dissent together afford 20 sittings to 260 people, or have done justice to 40 of the population—must the remaining 220 of that population be left to themselves? In the Water of Leith district the church and the sectaries have between them 143 seat-payers in a population of 1356, or a population of 286 may be considered as provided for—and is that a reason why the remaining one thousand and seventy should be left unprovided for? Or, because in the district in and about Alison's close, they have succeeded in obtaining 96 seat-holders in a population of 865, or done justice to 192 of the population, is that a reason why 673 human beings in that locality

should henceforth be left to themselves? In the College Wynd locality, we have nine sittings for 268 people: Deduct 18 from 268, and the question remains, Is nothing to be done, or rather, what is best to be done, for the remaining 250? In the Seaton's close district, we have in the Establishment and Dissenters together, 47 sittings held among 346 people; but still we have 252 who hold no sittings; and must nothing be done for these? In a district of Old Greyfriars we have 68 seat-payers among 624 people; and does this justify our neglect, in all time coming, of the 488 for whom there is no effectual provision? In the Castle-Hill district, where we have 59 seat-payers to 418 people, there remain 300 for whose Christian good something surely, and that the most effectual which can be fixed upon, ought to be devised. In Bull's close the Dissenters have done all, but still that all is only four seat-holders in a population of 103, leaving 95 to whom surely we do not stand acquitted of all further obligation. In Dickson's, Cant's, and Strichen's closes, we have 64 seat-holders to 461 people; but still there are 233 people there who remain to be provided for. In Blackfriars Wynd, we have, in churches and meeting-houses together, 57 seat-holders for 643 people, and still, therefore, 529 who should not be let alone. In Toddrick's Wynd, Murdoch's close, and Skinner's close, we have 658 people, and 54 seat-holders, shared between the Establishment and Dissenters —still leaving, however, 550 people whom neither the one nor the other have yet effectually cared for. In the whole parish of the Tron Church, Edinburgh,

we have 2624 people, of whom 341 have seats in the churches and meeting-houses—leaving the enormous number, in one of the least of the Old Town parishes, of one thousand nine hundred and forty-two people to be provided for, which can only be done by throwing open 976 accessible sittings, and plying them, besides, with the requisite week-day attentions, to induce their attendance. And so in the parish of Blackfriars, Glasgow, where the population is 6435, and the seat-holders of all denominations 1313, we have three thousand eight hundred and nine human beings, alike unprovided with the means of grace. And, lastly, in the town of Hawick, we have 4412 people, and 1239 seat-holders in its church and meeting-houses, leaving nineteen hundred and thirty-four at the same moral distance from the calls and the appliances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are such surveys and statistics as these that will at length unfold the whole extent of the nakedness and deficiencies of our land; and on these we rest our plea for a greater number, not of *general* churches, but of *endowed* and *territorial* churches—endowed for the sake of low seat-rents, territorial for the sake of an active pastoral superintendence which might be brought to bear upon all the families.

No. IV.

ON

# THE EVILS

WHICH THE

# ESTABLISHED CHURCH

IN EDINBURGH

HAS

## ALREADY SUFFERED, AND SUFFERS STILL,

IN

VIRTUE OF THE SEAT-LETTING BEING IN THE HANDS OF THE MAGISTRATES;

## WITH REMARKS

ON THE UNJUST AND INJURIOUS TENDENCY OF A LATE DOCUMENT, PUBLISHED BY THEIR AUTHORITY, ON THE SUBJECT OF THE UNLET SITTINGS.

ON

# THE EVILS

DONE TO

# THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH

IN EDINBURGH

BY

THE SEAT-LETTING BEING IN THE HANDS OF THE MAGISTRATES.

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1. In this age of hasty, but withal of confident opinions, it is extremely difficult to strike the precise adjustment between too much and too little explanation, so as to avoid the danger on the one hand of being so long as not to be read, and on the other of being so short as not to be understood. The phenomenon of unlet seats in our old churches is again brought forward in opposition to the building of new churches. We attempted last summer, by a series of communications in the Scottish Guardian newspaper, to expose the fallacy of that argument; but at such length, that though we might re-assemble and republish these in the form of a pamphlet, we despair of being perused by those who are now the most determined and clamorous in their resistance to our object. We afterwards thought ourselves exceedingly fortunate, when employed on the composition of an ordinary

letter, in having so managed as to embody the principle of our vindication, and make it palpable, as we thought, within the compass of a few sentences. We were therefore tempted by the chance of gaining additional converts, to insert that letter in a newspaper; and it has since been sent to various persons in a separate form. It has not been altogether without effect; for though it deals with but one phenomenon, even that of unlet room in the church of the Canongate, it does so on a principle which is applicable to all kindred phenomena. Still, however, there must be both attention and the capacity of generalization to perceive this; and, should either of these be wanting, another and distinct phenomenon—distinct, we mean, in respect of individuality, though the same in kind—will, in minds thus unfurnished, revive in all its original strength the old difficulty, of which we had too fondly imagined that it was now for ever done away with. Accordingly, after we had disposed of the argument grounded on the unlet seats of the Canongate, we find ourselves challenged anew, because of there being unlet seats also in Edinburgh. If repetition be nauseous to the reader, it is often infinitely more so to the writer —called upon to fight all the battle over again in some new quarter, and that with the very misconception which he had met and combated perhaps a hundred times before. The painter who is required to make successive copies of one of his own pictures will understand the feeling,—a feeling which every one, we apprehend, must lay his account with, who, intent upon some great practical

achievement, must obtain the consent of many minds and many wills, ere that he can carry it; and so is doomed, on every weary recurrence of the same oft-repeated objection, to a fresh reiteration of the same as oft-repeated argument.

2. We may here remark it as a deep and serious misfortune to any land, when, on a question of such momentous import, as the likeliest means for the moral and religious well-being of a community, whether viewed as a question of state or city legislation, the power to determine is lodged with men who will not bestow the time distinctly to comprehend, or the patience thoroughly to investigate. The misfortune is all the more aggravated in that this is pre-eminently a question, the principles of which are best verified on a walk of professional experience,—such principles therefore as none, we fear, (and these too in limited number,) but professional men will readily sympathize with. It is true that minds accustomed to generalization will recognise in every walk of experience, however peculiar, but other and interesting evolutions of the philosophy of our nature. They will respect truth from whatever quarter its informations are offered to them; and, measuring their confidence by the competency of the witnesses, they, from the very principle on which they would listen to physicians in things medical, or to mariners in things nautical, would also listen to ecclesiastics in things ecclesiastical. Now, we are the proper informants on the subject of moral education and the moral state of society. This is pre-eminently a thing ecclesiastical; for however contemptuously some

may look to religion in itself, or as an abstract system of doctrine, it were in utter defiance to all the lights of history and observation, did they refuse to acknowledge the intimate practical association which obtains between the religion and morality of the common people. It is therefore a very possible thing, between our municipal functionaries, on the one hand, and our parliamentary commissioners, or even parliamentary legislators, on the other, that, in the unmixed secularity of their deliberations, the highest interests of the community may be sacrificed, and for no other reason than because they repudiate the counsel which the teachers of Christianity are best qualified to give. It is indeed marvellous, in the busy agitation of men's spirits on the questions of civic and financial arrangement, how little, if at all, the question is entertained of the best method for moralizing a population, or of reclaiming them from the frightful degeneracy into which they have fallen. This highest of all considerations is scarcely recognised, and certainly not admitted as an element into the computations and reasonings of those practical men, who, under no other guidance than that of their wretched economics, and feeling no other impulse than that of a popular and prevailing cry, would abandon the cause of an influential system of instruction for the bulk of the people as unworthy of a single effort, unworthy almost of a single thought.

3. The principles on which to frame a sound ecclesiastical economy for large towns, are comprised in the four following propositions. (1.)

That if the minister have part of a town assigned to him for his parish, but at the same time draws his congregation equally and indiscriminately from all its parts, he must not expect that he will be able to perform regular and week-day household attentions, both to his hearers and his parishioners. One or other must be given up—for, to expatiate during the week among his general hearers, and along with this to enter on the local and territorial cultivation of his parish, is beyond the limits of human strength, and whenever the combination is attempted, it will be found to be impossible. (2.) That the more inviting of these two walks, and, therefore, the one far more frequently preferred, is to go forth through the week among the scattered households of the congregation, where the inmates have a certain amount of previous recognition for the clergyman who addresses them on the Sabbath, and a certain amount of that respect for Christianity which ensures him a friendly and reverential welcome—rather than to go forth on the contiguous households of a parochial territory, whose occupiers are strangers to himself, and strangers it may be in the mass to all the kindly and humanizing influences of religious observation. (3.) Even though the minister shall, on the impulse of what I hold to be the right view of his duty, resolve to make surrender of his stated hearers through the week, and to devote the whole of his spare time to the families of his parishioners alone, he does it under the mighty disadvantage of not being their Sabbath instructor in public, as well as their week-day friend and visitor in private. So that still the

extra-parochial congregation, by their exclusion of the parishioners from church, proves a dead weight on his parochial usefulness, if not by dissipating the attentions of the clergyman all the week long among hearers who are not parishioners, at least, and even though these attentions should be all concentrated within the parochial territory, by deducting tenfold from their moral influence, because expended upon his parishioners, who are not his hearers. (4.) That to afford a fair field for the clergyman, and place him in a condition of optimism for working the greatest possible effect both in respect to the filling of his church, and doing thorough justice to the families of his parish, the hearers and the parishioners ought to be as nearly identified as possible, in order that the united influence of the ministerial and pastoral duties may be brought to bear in one unbroken application on the same individuals living in a state of juxtaposition to each other. And it is only when, on the one hand, the parish is small enough for his becoming the acquaintance of all its families; and, on the other, when the place of worship is large enough, (and not pre-occupied withal,) for the accommodation of all within the limits of his charge who should be church-goers—it is only then that he is in fair circumstances for realizing within the heart of a large town the efficacy of the parochial system of Scotland.

4. These propositions we have elaborated and expanded in the papers to which we have already referred of the Scottish Guardian, but we fear at too great a length for the impatient reader, and

the no less impatient thinker of the present day. We should hold it but fair, that he either took the propositions now announced upon trust, or, if he wont do this, that he made a study of these papers. We shall feel it hard if he will do neither; or at all events we shall be utterly hopeless of obtaining from him an intelligent assent to any of our conclusions. Nevertheless, let us make one attempt more to demonstrate how it is, that, in our great towns, all the principles of a sound ecclesiastical system have been most cruelly traversed, more especially in Edinburgh,—and that for the purpose of establishing that the extension of the Church of Scotland is not to be given up in despair as a vain and fruitless enterprise, because of the wretched mismanagement in things ecclesiastical, with the melancholy results of it, which has taken place in the metropolis of Scotland.

5. Let it be premised, that Edinburgh proper, or Edinburgh within the limits of the royalty, has a population of 55,232; but that its suburb population, greatly augmented within the last half century, is now nearly double the city population. The population of the contiguous parishes of St Cuthbert's, Canongate, and Leith, consists, by the last census, of 106,924. For the inhabitants of the city, amounting, as we have seen, to upwards of 55,000, there is a provision of eighteen ministers, who officiate in thirteen churches—five of these churches being still what in Scotland we term collegiate churches, that is, having each the services of two ministers attached to them. The days were when not only had the inhabitants of the royalty

the exclusive occupation of their own churches, but when it was the invariable habit for the residenters of each separate parish to attend the proper and peculiar church of that parish. It appears, indeed, from Calderwood and others, that the violation of this order on the part of any of the inhabitants inferred ecclesiastical censures. We do not advocate this compulsory restriction of the people to their own parish church. It is the reverse policy of what is tantamount to their compulsory exclusion from it that we complain of; and in virtue of which, it is now made to appear, that in the Old Town of Edinburgh, chiefly occupied by the common people, and consisting of 28,196 inhabitants, only 727 attend the parish churches of the city. We propose to trace the footsteps of the process which has led to this result, and to show from it how the alleged phenomena of unlet sittings are to be accounted for.

6. It is unnecessary to explain here how the fund set apart by law for the maintenance of the clergy in Edinburgh is fitted to subserve the great object of an establishment, which is to provide Christian instruction on practicable terms to all ranks and degrees of the people. The present ecclesiastical revenue of Edinburgh proper would nearly overtake this its legitimate object, if restricted as it ought in the application of its benefits to the inhabitants of Edinburgh proper. Let the parish churches have but continued open as they were at the first to the parish families, absolved, and by this very fund, from the expense of maintaining their own clergyman, and absolved, we

shall imagine, from every other exaction—so as to have cheap and easy access to the sittings which are rightfully theirs; and we might at this hour have had the goodly spectacle of parochial churches filled by parochial congregations. We might have seen our city churches filled with the great mass and staple of their respective populations in the city parishes,—a sprinkling of aristocracy, no doubt, to deck and variegate the scene, but withal, an overwhelming majority of the men of handicraft and hard labour; or, to express it otherwise, as the aristocracy has greatly enlarged its dimensions of late years, we should have had a large infusion of that highly respectable class in society who are at or above the ten-pounders, with a much larger substratum in the proportion of three, four, or five to one of a class still more interesting,—those beneath the ten-pounders. And whether, within the church, we beheld the spectacle of its compressed and crowded pews occupied by workmen and their groups of decent families; or without the church, and at the sound of the well-known parish bell, saw every house along the line of our most plebeian streets pouring forth its family of worshippers—we should then, and before our city establishment was perverted, have seen in palpable and living exemplification the richest blessings of an establishment realized. But it is now incumbent upon me to explain what I mean by this perversion, and make known who were the authors of it.

7. I have spoken of it as one great good of an establishment, that it provided the means of bringing Christian instruction within the reach of the

whole population, to which I shall add another of at least equal importance, but which it can only secure by adhering to the parochial or territorial principle; and that is, the assignation to each of its ministers of a certain local assemblage of families who reside within a specified boundary, and with the pastoral care of whom he is made chargeable. But, in the case of Edinburgh, another party, a party between the church and the population, have stepped in, and, by the manner in which they have interposed, the good of an establishment has been cruelly broken up. For, first, in the matter of seat-letting, the parochial principle has been given to the wind. It is no reply to this that the magistrates and council do hold out a preference for the seats of every church to the inhabitants of that church's parish. The enormous seat-rents have completely neutralized the effects of this preference; and, in reference to the great bulk and body of the lower orders, have reduced it to the mockery of a name. So that, practically, the matter proceeds thus: the seats are as good as put up to auction; for it is altogether tantamount to this that they are held forth at a price, calculated and determined by the known acceptance and popularity of the minister. At this price, amounting to two pounds each, for the highest individual sittings, and to 13s. 3d.* each for an average of the whole, the church accommodation within the royalty is open to the competition of all, whether within or without the royalty,

* This is calculated from the last returns, by compounding the number with the prices.

whether the 55,000 inhabitants of Edinburgh proper, or the population of nearly double that number in the contiguous parishes of Canongate, and Leith, and St Cuthbert's, who, in the course of two or three generations, have so thickened and multiplied around it. The consequence is inevitable. The families, and more especially of the Old Town, have been ousted from their own proper churches: and the clergymen of these parishes, saddled with general congregations, have been dissevered from their own parish families. The working classes have been shouldered out of the Sabbath-places which belonged to them, by richer competitors from all distances, and from all points of the compass. I always understood it as a great argument for an establishment, that in providing for the support of the minister, it provided a cheap, if not a gratuitous Christian ministration, so as to make the services of the minister and the accommodation in his church a sort of common good to the folk of his parish. But the Magistrates and Council of Edinburgh have taken another way of it: and still, however, make they a common good* of it. After having wrested from the parishioners of the Old Town their proper and original interest in the sittings of their own churches, and exposed what they thus wrested to general sale—the proceeds of the unhallowed merchandise still go to a common good, it would appear, and that is to the common good of the city corporation. This sounds patriotically; but, in plain English,

* The general property or revenue of the city is called its common good.

they have turned, and in what numbers I shall presently tell,—they have turned the working classes of Edinburgh adrift into the outfields of heathenism; and with the price of those Sabbath-places from which they have ejected them do they enrich their own treasury. They have in effect planted a toll-gate, a most expensive toll-gate, at the entry of each of the city churches, by which to keep the poor of its parish out, and to let the rich, not of the parish, in. It is they, the Magistrates and Town-council, who erected these turnpikes; it is they who ordained the tolls, and who sit at the receipt of custom to obtain the produce of them. It is no reply whatever to this, that the produce is little more than a return for the outlay. We ask, who built these churches? Who bartered away the Christian education of the people for the adornment of the city? At whose bidding were these costly fanes, these magnificent temples made to arise? And then, who are chargeable with the enormity of having made sacrifice at their shrine of the religion of our common people? The plain answer is, the Magistrates and Town-Council of Edinburgh. They have as good as driven the lower classes of the city from the occupancy they once had in the city churches; and hold out to them instead, some stately architecture to gaze at. The families in thousands have been plundered of the bread of life, and instead of bread their plunderers have given them a stone. Such has been the practice hitherto of the city corporation; and after such experience of their care for the moral and religious well-being of the community, it becomes

the public to ponder carefully and well the character and effect of any proposition relative either to churches or clergymen, which might emanate from that honourable body.

8. I have dwelt the longer on this topic, that it has been converted into a grievous charge against the clergymen of Edinburgh; and they, in consequence of it, have been made the unmerited victims of a gross popular delusion. These high seat-rents are clearly the doing of the magistrates; yet the ministers have borne all the odium of it. Theirs is all the benefit; but to the clergy, as usual, is all the obloquy and scorn. It is a very glaring abuse in a matter, too, ecclesiastical; and at whose door therefore ought it to be laid but at that of the ecclesiastics? Now, it so happens, that the ecclesiastics have struggled with all their might against it. Times and ways without number, have the Presbytery of Edinburgh remonstrated with the city authorities upon this subject, and set up their earnest representations both by memorials and at interviews, for an act of justice to the population. Individual clergymen, at the head of their sessions, have implored a mitigation of the evil in behalf of their own parishioners. The minister of the Tolbooth church has been quite incessant in his appliances for relief, and of late has been somewhat eased, but still at the expense of other parishes and other congregations. This clergyman is not more distinguished by his unwearied parochial assiduities, than by his endeavours to obtain for himself a parochial congregation; but the barrier of these seat-rents stood in his way,

and, in his attempts to remove it, many are the buffetings which he has had to endure—as on one occasion, some years ago, when the Council felt annoyed by his urgencies; and "we shall raise these Tolbooth seat-rents still higher, if pestered any more about them," was the lordly reply of one of these city magnates. And yet the enemies of our church can manage, notwithstanding, to make this very grievance the mean of kindling into greater fierceness and intensity the flame of discontent and hatred against the clergy. Even one of our city-rulers themselves, (and this I hold to be one of the most beautiful examples of the kind of justice which our establishment is now receiving at the hands of its adversaries), a distinguished member of Council, and therefore art and part in doubling, some time ago, the seat-rents of the College church, and, more than art and part, who signalized himself by his opposition to a church of low seat-rents in the Cowgate; even he, an accessory, or rather a principal in this process of banishing our poor from the city churches, and member of the body on whom the whole responsibility of this fearful injustice should be laid, makes it one of his contemptuous charges against the establishment in Edinburgh, that it is of no further use than to furnish sermons to ladies and gentlemen. It is much about this period that a poem was ushered into the world, under the auspices of another of our then city rulers, that is, in one of the recent Numbers of Tait's Magazine. We may give it entire.

## THE POOR CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH.

" He has incurred a long arrear
And must despair to pay."—COWPER.
" To the poor the gospel is (not) preached."

" How glorious Zion's courts appear,"
The pious poor man cries:
" Stand back, you knave, you're in arrears,"
The manager replies.

POOR CHRISTIAN.

" The genius of the Christian code
Is charity, humility;"

MANAGER, *(In a rage.)*

" I've let your pew to ladies, Sir,
Of high respectability."

POOR CHRISTIAN.

" And am I then debarred the house
Where erst my father pray'd?
Excluded from the hallowed fane
Where my loved mother's laid?"

MANAGER.

" *Their* seat-rent, Sir, was never due;
The matter to enhance,
As duly as the term came round,
They paid it in advance."

POOR CHRISTIAN.

" The temple of the living God
Should have an open door,
And Christ's ambassadors should preach
The Gospel to the poor."

MANAGER.

" We cannot, Sir, accommodate
The poor in their devotions;
Besides we cordially detest
Such antiquated notions.

" We build our fanes, we deck our pews
For men of wealth and station;
(Yet for a time the thing has proved
A losing speculation.)

" Then table down your cash anon
Ere you come *here* to pray;
Else you may wander where you will,
And worship where you may."

POOR CHRISTIAN.

" Then I shall worship in that fane
By God to mankind given;
Whose lamps are the meridian sun,
And all the stars of heaven;

" Whose walls are the cerulean sky,
Whose floor the earth so fair,
Whose dome is vast immensity:—
All nature worships there."*

The author intimates very clearly his opinion that each of the city churches is a den of thieves; but who, I would ask, are the perpetrators of the thievery? Of that he gives us no information. Who was it that doubled the seat-rents of the College Church last year, when the more acceptable minister succeeded to the one that was less acceptable? Mr Cunningham is a house-going clergyman; and from the first moment of his appointment has been labouring with all his might among the families of his plebeian parish, with the view of gathering out from it a church-going people. But I will venture to say that by this act of the Magistracy, an insuperable barrier has been raised between the church that he preaches in, and at least one thousand of his parishioners. They are in a very fit state for having this song put into their mouths, every stanza of which, on the other hand, is equally fit to exasperate the bitterness of their feelings; but against whom? against the city clergy

* The last stanza of this poem is a quotation from Vedders' Covenanter's Sabbath.

who are guiltless, and that for the deed of the city rulers who are not guiltless. And it but consummates this history, it gives its greatest curiosity and perfection to it—that a song thus dealt out among a population whom themselves have so deeply injured, is furnished and set forth by one of their own number.

9. Such, then, is the procedure of the Magistrates of Edinburgh in the letting of our city churches. They have taken into their own hands the power of dealing with the seats as they would with any article of merchandise which was rightfully theirs. They set a price upon their occupancy—making this price to rise or fall with the eligibility of the church's situation, or with the fancied popularity of the clergyman. And they are not the parishioners of Edinburgh, not the inhabitants within the limits of the royalty, who are the sole competitors or customers in this trade of seat-letting. The whole public, both in and about Edinburgh, are admitted to the competition; and the unavoidable consequence is, that, speaking in the bulk, the common people of the town have been dispossessed of their own churches by the wealthy of the town and neighbourhood. The Magistrates hold themselves entitled to draw for these seats, whatever, to use their own expression, may be found to be "their worth in the market." We say nothing at present as to the legality of this claim. We speak of the effect which necessarily and historically ensues from the practical assumption of it. The clergy have one and all of them been dissevered from their own parish families.

The tie between ministers and parishioners is broken. The two parties have, in virtue of this unnatural separation, very much lost sight of each other. Generally and collectively speaking, the ministers do not preach to their parishioners on the Sabbath; and occupied as they are with the labours of an extra-parochial congregation, they are placed in most helpless circumstances for rendering to the people of their own territorial vineyard any sensible amount of pastoral or week-day attentions. And even though they could, the pastoral duties are bereft of almost all their efficacy in virtue of the ministerial being disjoined from them. The parochial system has been entirely broken up by the cruel interposition of the Magistrates, who, throughout their whole administration of this department in the affairs of the city, have betrayed so little of either paternal or patriotic regard for the moral or religious well-being of the community. All along it has been a shameful traffic for the enrichment of the city treasury, at the expense of the Christianity of the common people. The wealthier classes, who now pay their enormous seat-rents, could have afforded to build, and even endow, churches for themselves. In which case the existing churches, and especially in the Old Town, might have been left unviolated for their proper and original design, which was the accommodation of their own parish families; and thus the Establishment been suffered to prosecute its own rightful and peculiar task as a dispenser of Christianity to the general population.

10. The people of the country at large, and

particularly our neighbours in the south, will be no longer at a loss to understand that peculiar acerbity of feeling which exists in Edinburgh on the subject of the Establishment. In the first place, the fund for the maintenance of its clergymen, though it does not come *from* the pockets of the householders, any more than tithe does from the occupiers of land, yet it comes *through* their pockets, and practically they feel as if it was all paid by themselves. The meaning and object of such a fund is, that they and all others of the parish should have free or at least cheap access to their parish church; and when, instead of this, they are met, through the intervention of city exactors, by an enormous charge in the form of seat-rents, they feel it, and most naturally, a hard and oppressive thing that they should have another heavy sum, and in the shape too of an ecclesiastical imposition, to pay over again. The feeling is all the more aggravated that the people without the royalty, and who have none of the annuity to pay for ministers' stipend, are, in respect of admittance to the city churches, on equal terms with themselves: and if excluded from their own rightful occupancies by wealthier competitors from abroad, who can afford to pay a greater rent than they are either willing or able for, it is a sore and irritating reflection that they should have the burden of the ecclesiastical establishment of Edinburgh laid upon them without any of its benefits. The right ground of complaint here obviously lies in the intervention of this third party, the Magistrates of Edinburgh, who change and augment

the seat-rents at pleasure for the purposes of a revenue to the city corporation. But for this intervention, and had the system of parochial seat-letting been observed, we might at this hour have seen the great bulk of the inhabitants within the royalty accommodated on easy terms at their own proper churches; and the branded annuity tax, if tax it must be called, would mainly and substantially have been a tax on the wealthier classes of society for the Christian instruction of society at large. They are our city rulers who have cruelly broken up this bland and beneficent economy, by the imposition of another and distinct tax, which the former one was meant to supersede, and of which latter tax they receive all the produce, while the ministers have to bear all the odium of it. The ministers have thus been dissevered from their own parish populations, and placed in a false and obnoxious position before the eyes of the general community; and never perhaps in the history of human injustice has there occurred a more signal example of it, than that the perpetrators of a great public mischief should have so succeeded in shifting the burden of its consequent indignation from themselves, and laying it on the heads of men who suffer nothing but cruelty and contumely at their hands. They are the Town-Council of Edinburgh who extort these enormous seat-rents for the supply of their own treasury. And yet there are members of that Council who labour with all their might to direct the exasperation of their own measures against the persons and character of the men who have no hand in them. They are the Town-

Council of Edinburgh, who, in the management of the church's affairs, have smitten it with the impotency, and worse than the impotency, of the voluntary system; and then, by a publication of unlet seats, charged throughout with false principle and erroneous calculation, flash on the public eye the result of their own misdoings, as if the doings of an establishment, all whose arrangements they have departed from, and all whose principles they have violated. The effect of their last issued manifesto, blazoned in all the newspapers, and industriously distributed among our public and parliamentary men, is to lesson both the country and the government into the conclusion, that a religious establishment is a useless and ill-working thing, and so it is truly in the hands of such bungling and hostile administrators. They may be truly said to have it all their own way in the controversy; for they have not only propounded the argument, but with their own hands they have created its materials. After having multiplied in sufficient number the proofs of their own worthless misgovernment, they place them in full array before the eyes of the community, as proofs of the worthlessness of the church. Such is the exquisite injustice of our city rulers; but we trust that neither the government nor the country will be any longer deceived by it, nor confound the effects of an establishment rightly conducted, with the effects of its wretched mal-administration in the town of Edinburgh.

11. The general character, then, of the actual system in Edinburgh may be stated thus.—The

citizens in their respective parishes have no preference held out to them for the vacant sittings in their own proper churches. The competition is quite general and indiscriminate; and applicants, in whatever place of residence or from whatever distances, are (saving in cases of personal favouritism,) upon equal terms. We have heard it professed by some of our city rulers, that the preference of parishioners is their law of seat-letting. But it has been little acted upon. The public at large have no distinct or confident understanding of this; and so, if ever proclaimed as a rule, or given as an instruction, practically it is of no effect. Now this at once dissolves the most beneficial association which can by any possibility be established between ministers and their parishes. The strongest tie which can bind a clergyman to his territorial vineyard is broken. On the simple cessation of the preference which we are now contending for, the exchange forthwith proceeds, and is speedily consummated, of a parochial for a general congregation; and so in every great town, we fear, of the empire, all those manifold facilities as well as commanding moral influences, which lie in the conjoined forces of the ministerial and the pastoral, when wielded by the same individual upon the contiguous households of one and the same locality, are altogether unknown.

12. But superadded to this there is another cause, which, even had the preference that we now advocate been most rigidly acted on, would of itself have effected an almost entire disruption between the plebeian parishes of the city and their respec-

tive clergymen. We mean the extravagant seat-rents; and those laid on at the arbitrary discretion of the Town-Council, in opposition to the earnest remonstrances of the Presbytery, as well as the special and importunate requests of those individual clergymen who have interested themselves in this matter on behalf of their own parochial families. It is true that these seat-rents are variable, and differ in different churches. But it is not the condition of the parish in regard to its wealth or poverty, which forms the rule or principle of these variations. It is the popularity of the clergyman which virtually reduces the letting of seats to the same footing with the letting of houses or fields. In effect, these church-seats are let at such a price as they will fetch; and like any other marketable commodity, they undergo the substantial process of an auction, whether or not they undergo the forms of it. In other words, each parochial community is exposed to the foreign competition of their whole surrounding neighbourhood. The wealth of the New Town and of the suburbs is brought to bear with overwhelming effect on the Old Town parishes, whose people, ejected from their ancient ecclesiastical privileges, have forsaken their ancient habits, and are now fast degenerating, or rather by an immense majority have actually sunk, into a state of heathenism.

13. Having thus stated the general character of the actual system in Edinburgh, let us now state the general effect of it on the condition and habits of the city population. It is true that under this system many churches might still continue to be

served by able and impressive clergymen, and to be filled even to an overflow with large and admiring auditories. And yet, in perfect compatibility with this phenomenon, there might, and in rapid process of formation, be a dense and ever enlarging mass of heathenism in society. Wherever a predisposition to Christianity is strong enough, attendance on its lessons will still be kept up, even under this system with all its disadvantages. But unfortunately it is not a predisposition which, with the generality of mankind, can be confided to any spontaneous or inherent vigour of its own; and it will therefore die away from the hearts of the vast majority, unless it be sustained by an aggressive force *ab extra*, by an incessant appliance of means and influences from without. A general congregation may be regarded as the product of a combined voluntary movement on the Sabbath, by the hearers, to the minister. A parochial congregation, made out from the contiguous households of any given territory, can only be formed at the first and kept up afterwards, by a voluntary movement through the week in dutiful and frequent reiteration of the minister to the hearers. Let this parochial system, then, be supplanted by the general system; and it is the inevitable effect, that the parish families will one by one, and at length in great numbers, fall away, and beyond the scope of any external force which might recover or recall them. They recede from the observation of the minister, who, after losing sight of them, finds himself abundantly occupied with other duties and other cares. After that the moral force of the clergyman's

attentions has been withdrawn from the habitations of the poor, and the wonted facilities of access to the church he preaches in have also been barred against them, we are not to wonder at the rapid irreligion which ensues; or that so many families, when thus left to the earthliness of their own nature, should gravitate, and with an accelerated velocity of descent, into a state of entire earthliness. The contagion spreads every year; and whether it be by the degeneracy of old families or the importation of new ones, each plebeian parish, in effect outlawed from the moral regimen of an Established Church, changes only to the worse, and takes on a deeper hue of moral desolation. From the moment that ministers have lost the old territorial means, or quitted the old territorial management, from that moment their parishes have become territories of heathenism; and hence it is that vice has obtained a local or geographical settlement in certain quarters, which, with somewhat the feeling of a possessory right, it now claims as being peculiarly its own. But in truth, by this departure from the parochial system, the evil has become quite general, and extends over the whole city. Let families lapse where they may into a regardlessness of the gospel and its ordinances, there is no effective care or cognizance taken of them.* The place in which they live brings no security along with it that a full moral or religious attention will be bestowed upon them. And from

* Not necessarily arising from the carelessness of the minister, but, as we have already explained, from the circumstances by which he is surrounded.

the time that ministers have given up a special surveillance, each of his own definite and assumed locality, has the aggregate community, let slip from all the ancient holds, drifted at random as they may, wholly given over to the counsel of their own hearts, and the sight of their own eyes.

14. But let us now exhibit in ascertained numbers the precise amount of this degeneracy as verified by actual observations taken, and certainly without any selection, from various parts of the Old Town of Edinburgh. Even the last returns issued from the council-chamber present us with appalling enough information on this head, when it tells that the whole of the Old Town, with a population of 28,196, has only 727 rented sittings in all the city churches, while in the extended royalty, with a population of 27,036, there are 4746 who have seats in the city churches. The remaining seat-payers, amounting to 3826, live beyond the royalty; so that between the New Town and its environs, the people of the Old Town have suffered a grievous dispossession from the churches of the Establishment,—insomuch that less than 1 in 38 of the inhabitants of the Old Town pay for sittings in the places which the Establishment has provided for them. This fact, which our adversaries call a proof of the inefficacy of the Establishment, and which we call a proof of the sore mischief that the Magistrates have inflicted upon it, might well excite our alarms for the moral and ecclesiastical state of the population, and direct the footsteps of the anxious and exploring philanthropist to their actual abodes, that at their

own mouths he may learn how it fares with them. It is there, in fact, where he will gather his far most valuable statistics for the elucidation of the true principle and philosophy of his whole subject, —statistics which have been sadly neglected and overlooked, but which nevertheless contain the real materials of the question at issue. And there are more lessons than one to be drawn from such a survey. We shall there learn not only how little the Establishment, made powerless by the magistracy, has done for the general population, but also how little an unfettered voluntary system has done to supplement its deficiencies, and so how much remains for the Establishment to do, when restored to its original energies and rights, and rescued from the grasp of those unworthy hands which have done nothing but pervert and paralyze it,— those adversaries who first cripple the church and then calumniate it,—who have struck it with impotency, and would now hold forth that venerable institute, which themselves have marred and disabled, as a spectacle of derision to the land.

15. The following, then, are a few specimens of the state of the population with respect to seat-holding. It exhibits the number in every district which has been made the subject of an ecclesiastical survey, who have this guarantee for the regularity of their attendance on a place of worship, that they have purchased, or otherwise obtained for themselves a right of occupation there. That over and above these some do attend and occupy sittings they do not pay for there can be no question. Their precise number it is difficult

to ascertain, though most certainly they form but a small proportion of the whole population. At all events it is a most undesirable state of things, that any of our people should be exposed to a shift which cannot be taken without a certain moral violence being suffered, a certain moral deterioration being sustained by it. We have evidence for at least a good many hundreds among the tens of thousands who go nowhere that do occupy sittings, but occupy them by stealth,—a condition of things, in respect of church-accommodation, that should be put an end to, whether by a sufficient number of free sittings, or what were greatly more to our taste in towns, a sufficient number of very cheap sittings, amounting to at least two-thirds of the whole church-room. Of all illicit things, there is none which appears to us more incongruous or unseemly than an illicit attendance at church. It wont proceed so far among the population as to effectuate any thing like a general attendance upon ordinances. It will stop with a certain, and that not a very large portion of the people; and even with them there is something unhealthful about such a system of church-going,—frail and precarious in respect of habit, equivocal in respect of character.

16. But the number who actually possess the right of sittings, whether by purchase or otherwise, can be definitely ascertained; and the following are the specimens, as far as we have selected them, of the Old Town of Edinburgh. Let it be particularly remarked of the second column, that the numbers comprehend all the seat-holders, of every denomination, in or out of the Establishment.

| | Population. | Seats taken in all Places of Worship. | Proportion. | Authority. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In the Tolbooth Parish * | 3256 | 450 | less than 1 in 7 | Rev. Mr Marshall |
| A District in the Grass market . . . | 418 | 19 | 1 in 22 | Rev. Mr Wilkie |
| A larger section of the same | 1348 | 89 | less than 1 in 13 | Rev. D. Mitchell |
| An eastern and better part of the Cowgate . | 420 | 74 | less than 1 in 5 | Dr Abercrombie |
| A westerly and worse part of the Cowgate, comprehending the district from Alison's Close to Old Fishmarket Close . | 865 | 96 | 1 in 9 | Rev. W. B. Clark |
| First District of Old Greyfriars . . . | 624 | 68 | less than 1 in 9 | Rev. D. Mitchell |
| A District of the New North Parish . . . | 620 | †40 | less than 1 in 15 | Rev. Mr Bruce |
| College Parish . . | 3300 | 418 | 1 in 8 | Rev. Mr Cunningham |
| North side of the Cowgate, Old Greyfriars, from the bottom of the Old Fishmarket Close to the bottom of Blair Street . | 297 | 28 | less than 1 in 10 | Rev. W. B. Clark |
| South side of the Cowgate, from the Horse Wynd to the College Wynd, and west side of the College Wynd . . . | 262 | 9 | 1 in 29 | Do. Do. |

17. Such, then, is the *general* effect, the effect in the main, of the ecclesiastical system that has been adopted in Edinburgh. It has effected a most violent and unnatural disruption between the churches and their corresponding parishes. It has broken up the old connexion of the city clergy-

* As a specimen of statistical minuteness and care, I may here mention the last document put into my hands respecting that Parish, and in which the statistics are given of the north side of the Castlehill, from the Castle downwards to No. 529, High Street, in which we have the domicile of each family, the occupation of its head, the number of its members above and below 12 years of age, and the number of seats taken in all places of worship, with the denomination and place of attendance. The population of this district is 418, among whom there are 59 seat-holders, being less than one in seven of the whole. The Rev. John Thomson, a probationer, and Mr Andrew A. Bonar, a student of divinity, have affixed their names to this document.

† It should be remarked that this, and indeed all the worst houses of Mr Bruce's Parish have been swept away by the late improvements; and as the best part of it has been spared, it now exhibits a very improved proportion of seat-holders to the whole population—it still, however, being less than one in six. The numbers are as follow:—Inhabitants 810, Seat-holders 132.

men and the families of their respective vineyards—the former now occupied with their general congregations, the latter set adrift from their own places of worship, and exiled from the attentions of their own proper ministers. But for this cruel disruption, the entire work of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, who, in the grossness of the mercantile spirit, have recklessly and unfeelingly turned our churches into a mercantile speculation—but for this we might still have beheld in full vigour the influence of the parochial system with all its kindly relationships throughout the mass of the Old Town population, having nine churches to accommodate them on the Sabbath, and twelve clergymen to concentrate upon them the whole force of their week-day services. They are our city rulers who have stepped in between these two parties—inflicting thereby a sore degradation on the people, and a sore despite and odium upon the clergymen. The upper door-keepers of our churches have done on the large scale, what the door-keepers beneath them are said to do upon the small. They have let in the ladies and gentlemen who can give, and they have kept out the common people who cannot give.* It is thus that the inhabitants of the New Town have

* I can imagine nothing more revoltingly painful, or more fitted to alienate the general population from the Establishment, than the conflicts which are alleged to take place between the cupidity of the door-keepers and the Christian appetency of those who have no rented seats, but wish to obtain admittance. This is an abuse altogether worthy of the surveillance of a kirk-session, who ought to have an elder appointed every Sunday, for the special purpose of protecting these general intrants, and securing their accommodation in all the sittings which might be left unoccupied after the commencement of the service.

dispossessed the inhabitants of the Old. Had it not been for this, the whole of the ancient Royalty might still *en masse* have presented us with a church-going population; and the opulent from without, who compose our present general congregations and who pay a seat-rent of above £7000 a-year to the city corporation, could have equally afforded to build and endow a requisite number of churches for themselves. It is the seizure of this money by the hands of the magistrates, and the diversion of it into their own treasury, which has done the whole mischief, which has ejected the common people of the Old Town from their places of rightful occupancy in their own churches, and laid an arrest on that prosperous and progressive increase of churches to which the affluence of the New Town would otherwise have given birth. It is they, we repeat, who have utterly distempered the ecclesiastical system of the establishment in Edinburgh. It has been the doing of several generations; and the measure of the iniquity is now filled up, when the accumulated mischief which their own hands have perpetrated is laid as a burden of reproach on the head of that establishment which they have all along laboured to disable, and our adversaries amongst them now labour to destroy.

18. But it is now time to enter in detail on the returns which have been circulated and set forth to the public eye with so much eagerness. The bare inspection of the tables will prove the extreme haste with which they have been constructed, as if some urgent and immediate purpose were to be gained by it. They exhibit a number of arithmeti-

cal discrepancies between sums and their items, between the whole amount of sittings in the church this year and last, though no change has been made either in the number of pews or in their capacity. For these, and certain minor explanations which account for so many of the unlet sittings, we refer to the notes which are placed after the Tables in the Appendix. We shall confine ourselves to the explanations of the greatest real effect in the question at issue.

19. The explanation then which we hold to be the first in order, because of greater arithmetical importance than all the rest put together, is, that the number who do occupy sittings in our churches greatly exceeds the number who pay for them. There cannot be a doubt that never was there a larger attendance on the churches of the city, than at this moment; an attendance that is progressively increasing, is much larger now than it was ten years ago, and very greatly larger than it was twenty or thirty years ago. It is really not a church phenomenon, but a cess-office phenomenon that we are called to account for. It is not the system of non-attendance, but the system of non-payment that is upon the increase; and we appeal to some of our city rulers if they have not themselves to thank for it. Have they not given every encouragement to the non-payment of the church-annuity; and are they now to be astonished if the principle which they have thus encouraged shall recoil upon themselves in the non-payment of the church-rents? Resistance, in fact, to all sorts of payment for public objects is of late becoming more and more the order of the day; and our reformed

Town Council, under whose auspices the habit certainly has not diminished, must not expect of the community a special exception in their own favour. But in either way a double mischief is laid upon the clergy. By the one non-payment they are made to suffer in their means of subsistence; by the other they are made to suffer in their credit. There is truly a hard task put into their hands. They must suffer, without a murmur, the resistance of the people to the one ecclesiastical impost, in a consequent decline of their own personal revenue; but unless they can, at the same time, school the people out of their resistance to the other ecclesiastical impost, theirs must be all the reproach of the consequent decline in the revenues of the city. To avail ourselves of our own Scotch language, they have not only to bear all the skaith of the one non-payment, but all the scorn of the other. Meanwhile, however it fares with either of these revenues, the attendance on the whole, that only true test of the acceptance of our clergymen, is rapidly upon the increase. The Old Greyfriars, with its 417 unlet sittings, when Mr Sym preaches, is quite full. The Tolbooth Church, excepting such seats as are absolutely useless, being out of all sight and hearing of the clergyman, and a few of the highest rented in the fronts of galleries—this church with its 467 unlet sittings is quite full. The communicants of the Tron Church exceed the number of seat-payers, and these in general form but a part of the whole congregation—a very palpable proof how much the occupation of seats might outstrip the renting of them. In short, it will be found,

that with the exception of two, or at most three, of our city churches, there is a large or increasing attendance upon all, and a crowded attendance upon a greater number than at any period within the memory of any now alive. At least nine-tenths of the clerical appointments which have taken place within the last fifteen years have turned out prosperous appointments, we mean prosperous in the ecclesiastical sense of the word as followed up by an increase in the number of hearers, or at least by the maintenance of the very large congregations which were bequeathed from one popular clergyman to another. Even the College Church, which is made in the returns of the Town-Council to exhibit the most adverse phenomenon in the whole record, forms a remarkable exemplification of the real progress of the establishment in Edinburgh, and that in spite of all the disadvantages with which it has to struggle. The appointment of Mr Cunningham was ecclesiastically a most prosperous one, being followed up by an attendance very much greater than that of his predecessor; and nothing but the eagerness of the Town-Council to make it as prosperous in their sense of the word, or to make it as municipally prosperous as it was ecclesiastically so, has enabled the adversaries of the church in that corporation to present an exhibition of decline. On observing the first year's attendance at the old rents, they determined to make their own harvest of it; and on the second year of Mr Cunningham's incumbency, the rents were about doubled. By that single act they raised a barrier against at least a thousand of the College Church parishioners.

The increased rent came as an unexpected demand on the seat-holders of 1833—4, many of whom refused compliance with it; and whether they continue to occupy without paying, or have fallen away from their attendance and have been replaced by others, certain it is that there is no visible abatement in the bulk or density of the congregation. There is no decline to be seen in the attendance of the church. The only decline that can be seen is in the ledgers of the city. We do not blame our civic functionaries for being so feelingly alive to this disappointment. But we do blame them for laying upon the clergy the obloquy and burden of their own doings. There can be no difficulty now in understanding why the great bulk of the parish families in the Old Town have fallen away from their attendance upon the Establishment. The great bulk of the church room, which was rightfully and originally theirs, has been barred by the enormous seat-rents against their possible occupation of it. Of the whole 14,308 sittings in the city churches, only 216 are let at so low a rent as two shillings,—whereas in each of the new churches singly that are now providing for the population of Glasgow, there will be at least 300 of this description; and in that town of great and noble enterprise, one-half (it ought to be two-thirds) of the whole church room will be let at a price fully within the means of the working classes. It were well if they who dogmatize so confidently on the subject of seat-letting could take a comprehensive view of all the elements which have to do with this phenomenon. The greatest of these elements is

strangely overlooked in the whole of this controversy —the influence of the minister's week-day attentions, first in creating, and afterwards in keeping up among the people of his parish their habit of Sabbath attendance. So indispensable in towns is the connexion between these two things, that were seat-rents let down at this moment to two shillings overhead, or even annihilated, so as to throw open the whole of the church room at accessible prices to the lowest of the people, we shall greatly mistake the result if we look for a great and visible increase of attendance *per saltum* on the part of the parish families. A low seat-rent is a *sine qua non*, without which their attendance, even in the most favourable circumstances, cannot be expected. But a low seat-rent has nothing in it of the efficiency of a positive or impellent cause, which must be set in operation before the people will generally move. To reduce the seat-rents is but to remove an obstacle in the way of the popular movement, not to give an impulse or to impress a direction on the movement itself. For this latter purpose there must be a laborious missionary work on the part of the clergyman, an aggressive influence throughout the tenements of the parish, that he may revive among its now torpid families a taste and a demand for the services of the sanctuary. In one word, he must become a house-going minister, ere they will become a church-going people. A very familiar and well-known example will illustrate this process. The fee of admittance to our College Museum was let down the other month from two shillings and sixpence to one shilling;

and we have no doubt that they who confound a *sine qua non* with an efficient cause, anticipated, in consequence, a sudden enlargement of the number of visitors. But in this expectation they have been greatly disappointed. It is not enough that a barrier is taken away; a moving force must be put in operation. Not only must the reduction be generally known, but a dormant taste, a long-extinguished habit must be created anew, ere even the frequenting of our rich and splendid museum shall come to be generally acted on. And what is true of a place of entertainment, is still more emphatically true of a place of worship and of religious instruction. The great bulk, if not of the lower, at least of the lowest class of society, have lost all value and demand for the Sabbath services of any denomination; and it must be a very gradual work of great patience and great pains-taking, not ere their appetite for the ministrations of the gospel is filled, but ere the appetite is formed. The people must be compelled to come in; and our city clergymen, occupied with their extra-parochial congregations are in the worst possible circumstances for such an achievement. It is not at all inexplicable to us, it is to our mind in perfect keeping with such a state of matters, that the high-rented seats should be better taken than those which are low-rented. They who have both the wealth and the will in all parts of the city and neighbourhood form the great staple of our congregations,—whereas they who have neither the wealth nor the will, the neglected families of our putrid lanes our deep and densely-peopled recesses,

wanting the first of these elements, the wealth, can never once be found in any of the more commodious and respectable of our church-pews; and wanting the second of these elements, the will, they turn from the crumbs and fragments which have been thrown down to them, and so leave unpaid the wretched and worthless remainder of pauper sittings which have been left out for their occupation.

20. The reader will not fail to remark the very peculiar nature of the task which the Magistrates of Edinburgh have put into the hands of our city clergymen. They have made over to each a church and a parish; but the thing required is not that he, the minister, shall replenish that church from the families of that parish. It is not that you, the minister of the Old Greyfriars' church, shall go forth among the people of the Old Greyfriars' parish, and gather thence by the force of your attentions through the week, a congregation who shall return your visits of kindness and piety by their attendance on the Sabbath. They have in no instance, for the purpose of facilitating such a process, allowed either the clergyman or his kirk-session that disposal of the mass of the church-room, or that command over the terms of its occupation which might enable them to hold out a preference for the vacant sittings to the parishioners, and at such rents as are adapted to the circumstances of a locality inhabited chiefly by artisans and labourers. Instead of facilitating so happy and healthful a process as this, they have thrown every obstruction across its way. One of the indispensable elements of course to its success is

the appointment of a popular clergyman. This they provided about a year ago in the person of my excellent friend the Rev. Mr Sym. But they took care to follow it up by another and an adverse element, which goes completely to neutralize it. They followed it up by a great increase of the seat-rents, as if the only return they cared for, was of money to their own treasury—*their own common good;* not of improved moral and religious habits among the people to the salvation of unperishable souls and the common good of the community at large. The combination wanted, and which with all my attempts for twenty years, I have never been able to realize, in opposition to the selfish views and the gross impracticable obtuseness of our civic and municipal functionaries both in Glasgow and Edinburgh,—the combination which my heart is set upon is the appointment of a vigorous and devoted city minister, who will concentrate his main efforts on the families of his own territorial vineyard, to a parish small enough for the exertions of one man, and with the privilege of a strict preference for the sittings of its own church, while at the same time the rent of these sittings shall be, one and all, low enough for the circumstances of the general population. And the task which I would assign to the minister thus appointed, is to fill that church out of that parish. On the strength of explanations which I have repeated in various works, times and ways without number,* I have to this hour the unshaken con-

* See among other writings the second and third chapters of my work on the Christian and Economic Polity of a Nation, my

fidence, that he would find this a twenty-fold easier task than the task laid upon him by the Magistrates, which is not to fill the whole of a low-rented church out of a whole, and at the same time, a poor parish, —but out of that parish, or out of the whole city together, to fill up a scantling of low-rented sittings which the Magistrates have left, after they have monopolized the great body of the church and all its respectable sittings, held forth on their own arbitrary and unconscionable terms to the public at large. I observe, that in the Old Greyfriars' church, of 826 sittings there are, according to the returns, 35 sittings to be disposed of at 3 shillings, and 62 at 4 shillings each.* The average rent of the higher sittings is above 10 shillings each. Now my position is, that it were a far more difficult achievement, in the actual circumstances of the Old Greyfriars' minister, to fill these few supplementary seats out of his parish, than out of the same parish to fill the whole church, were it put into the circumstances which I have ventured to recommend. The likelihoods and facilities of the

tract on Churches and Chapels, and my last little pamphlet on the Right Ecclesiastical Economy of a Large Town.

* In the act of penning this sentence, there was handed in to me the following note from a friend:—"Mr Sym is come in this minute from an examination of his church. The result knocks the report of the Magistrates on the head. There are no sittings at 2s.; and the sittings at 3s. are not fit for a dog: and the sittings at 4s. are little better. No man, in his senses, would pay for one of them. What are we to think of those who publish such reports?—and what are we to think of the ministers who seem to think it a virtue to remain silent under every species of misrepresentation and abuse?"

It should be observed, that the seats marked at 3s. are reduced to 2s. in favour of parishioners,—still certainly too dear, however, if not fit for a dog.

latter achievement, I have expatiated over at such length, and with such frequency, on many former occasions, that I have not the heart for a fresh repetition of the argument. But I may advert for a moment to the difficulties of the former achievement, which is, not to make out an occupancy for the whole church, but to make out an occupancy for the miserable remnant left at low prices by the Magistrates, as an evidence of their great and patriotic desire for the moral well-being of our general population. Not to speak of the undoubted fact, that these remnants are always the largest when the ministers are the least attractive, what are we to think of the discouragements which lie in the way even of the most energetic and most popular clergyman, amid the conditions of that very singular problem, the fulfilment of which is expected at his hands? He, in the first place, is saddled with the burden and care of an extra-parochial congregation; and I must use the privilege of a professional man, in telling all those who are not professional, and asking them to believe it on my word, that the minister who attempts satisfactorily to overtake his week-day or pastoral duties to the families of his general hearers, has not a particle either of strength or time for the families of his parish; and they, after having fallen, by the neglect of two or three generations, into a habit of non-attendance upon the ministrations of the gospel, will never once think of looking after him unless he shall look after them.* But, in the

* This is more fully explained in the Right Ecclesiastical Economy of a Large Town.

second place, what heart can he have for the enterprise, when, after all, he has no more church-room to offer than would accommodate the fiftieth part of the population he moves amongst; and when, therefore, instead of being fired with the generous and hopeful enterprise of working a general and sensible effect on the mass of his people, by gathering hearers from every house, the whole result of his laborious and oft-repeated explorations, throughout a parochial community, which, in the most favourable circumstances, he would find to be sufficiently inert and impracticable, would be the recovery here and there of a hearer—thus diminishing to an extent that is quite disheartening the proportion between the fruit of his labour and the immense fatigue of it; likening his task to that of him who painfully searches out for particles of ruby in the sand of the sea-shore, or for a few sound grains that may be fit as seed in a heap of corn tainted with disease. But it is not enough that we speak of the adverse moral forces which operate upon the clergyman in an undertaking of this kind: there are also adverse moral forces operating in the minds of the people. In the first place, they will not submit to be drafted from one unpopular clergyman to another, by a new act of dispossession on the appointment of the new and more attractive preacher who has succeeded the old one. Then they will not be willing to exhibit themselves like the few notable specimens of a degraded caste among the ladies and gentlemen of the congregation at large; not so willing certainly as if they had a church to themselves, and were kept in countenance

by the general aspect of its occupiers, consisting mainly of their own equals in society, the families of their fellow-workmen, and the families of the masters who employ them. They will not consent, and I cannot blame them, to be either pilloried near the roof in an upper tier of galleries; or squeezed into the odds and ends of acute-angled seats; or stuck behind pillars, and penned together in the darkest and most distant places of the fabric; or ranged in forms along the sides of passages, where they must either draw up or compress themselves into narrower dimensions, that the aristocrats of the congregation may have sufficient largeness and liberty when stalking by to the commodious sittings from whence themselves have been dispossessed. Give me, I say, a right constitution for a parochial church, and it were infinitely easier to fill that church from a population of the working classes, and fill it to the very door, than to fill up those wretched driblets of room, those shreds and patches of refuse accommodation of which we have been so boastfully told, as evidences at once of the great patriotism of the Edinburgh Magistrates, and, withal, the great powerlessness of the Edinburgh clergy. It is thus that the ministers of the city, even those of them who have the most overflowing audiences in Scotland, our Muirs, our Candlishes, our Syms, our Bruces, our Marshalls, and our Gordons, have all had an account of unlet sittings preferred against them. But the injury to them is nothing compared to the deep and practical injustice that is done to the general population, whose Christianity has been suspended

on the difficult and precarious condition, that they shall first render a price for the few ignoble places, which, at the hand of their unfeeling rulers, is all that is offered to them. And because the worthless and humiliating offer is not accepted, this is held as a sufficient test of their hopeless and incorrigible depravity, to reclaim them from which not another expedient must be thought of, not another effort must be made.*

21. We shall conclude this remonstrance with the narrative of a recent transaction, and we leave the reader to judge what interpretation should be put upon it.

22. Our reformed Town-Council, when they first entered upon power, began their proceedings with the high imagination of something great to be done; and equally high resolutions, we have no doubt, that theirs should be the glory of doing it. The reformation of our vicious ecclesiastical system was one of the earliest of their enterprises; and they were not long of grappling with the Presbytery of Edinburgh on the subject. To one of their proposals, a reduction in the number of the clergymen, we never could consent, in the wofully unprovided state of our city families. But to an-

* Though I have abundantly expatiated elsewhere on another influence that has most essentially to do with this process, I have not adverted to it in the text, yet am unwilling to pass it altogether by. We mean that force of sympathy and example which operates so powerfully among next door neighbours, and so often begets a gregarious movement amongst the families of a contiguous population. This influence you may set agoing, if you have the command of as much church-room as will accommodate two or three hearers in every house of the parish; but this influence you cannot set agoing, if you have only the command of as much church-room as will accommodate one hearer in every ten houses.

other of their proposals, the uncollegiating of those charges which are served by two clergymen, we rendered our frank and immediate acquiescence, on the express understanding, however, that on the death of any of the collegiate ministers, a new church and parish should be provided for his successor. Two distinct opportunities have since occurred for carrying this arrangement into effect; the one in consequence of the death of Dr Inglis, and the other of the death of Dr Brown. But the great obstacle alleged from the very first by the members of the corporation was the state of the city funds, and their total inability for building new churches. Of this we ourselves undertook to relieve them; and by an appeal to a few chosen philanthropists, succeeded in raising enough of money for the erection of a church with a thousand sittings in the Cowgate. The district chalked out for it has a population of 2500, of which we had previously ascertained that not more than 250, or one in ten, were seat-holders in churches or meeting-houses of any denomination. We, therefore, had ample materials for the filling of our new church, once that the right moral means were brought to bear, and had operated a full effect upon them—we mean the unwearied assiduities of a new clergyman, whose office it should be, in conjunction with his coadjutors of the eldership and Sabbath schools, so to operate on the people of his assigned locality by his varied attentions through the week, as at length to constrain their willing attendance upon himself on the Sabbath. The lowest seat-rents fixed by the constitution of

our proposed church, and never afterwards to be exceeded; the preference for its sittings secured in all time coming as the inalienable right of the parishioners; the very residence of their future clergyman in the midst of them; the necessary supplement of schools and other institutes for the completion of parochial economy; all, in short, which could enter into a right system of parochial means, or form the beau-ideal of a well-constituted parish for the working classes of a city,—all was arranged in our own mind; and never, we confess, did our hopes run higher than when placed on the confines of a great moral experiment, we felt that now we had within our reach all the elements of that very combination which, for twenty years, we, in a vain and unequal contest with the power and the prejudices of municipal rulers, had struggled to realize. We required no outlay at their hands. Ours was to be all the contingent loss attendant upon the uncertainty, and all the actual loss as well as disgrace and mortification of the failure, should that have been the termination of the enterprise.* With such a guarantee of perfect safety

* The low-minded imputations which were preferred against the motives of those who shared in this enterprise were effectually rebutted at the time. It is true that had the Town-Council after our experiment had been brought into a state of safety been disposed to become proprietors of this new church, they would have been expected to pay the price; but out of this price I know that I would have received from the subscribers all that was necessary for the erection and endowment of parish schools, and the completion in fact of a full Parochial economy in the Cowgate. The subscribers, disappointed in their first undertaking, have commenced a second in the Water of Leith, where, in default of an Edinburgh stipend for the endowment, we can have no return from the seat-rents that will not be absorbed in the maintenance of the

to the city funds, we anticipated no difficulty; and more especially as we had to deal with a body of reformers of whom we fondly imagined, that as their great idol was the will, so their great aim would be the well-being of the people. Yet these very rulers did interpose their veto upon the occasion. That system of collegiate charges against which they flourished, so long as they hoped to inflict discredit on the church, by the exhibition of a contrast between the corruption of its ministers and their own high-sounding patriotism—that system, after the ministers had consented to its abolition, they themselves have quietly and spontaneously recurred to. There is nothing we will venture to affirm in the ecclesiastical administration of their predecessors in office which can match the enormity of this proceeding. In the olden time, the habit and character of which we have no wish to recall, they moved quietly and continuously onward in the stream of things as they are, and never dreamed of change or improvement. But these men in the broad day-light of their own blazoned achievements, do revert to the very corruption which themselves had denounced. It ceased to be a grievance in their eyes, so soon as it ceased to be a topic of reproach or invective against the clergy; and so, of their own accord, do they continue to appoint these collegiate ministers as heretofore. The very last exercise of their patronage in this way was the appointment of a colleague to

clergyman. In the present enterprise there is no return looked for by the subscribers. In the former, there was no return cared for.

a minister whose congregation they report as consisting of fifty-six hearers, and whose unlet sittings amount to 159. This was their method of replacing a vacancy,—by giving a second minister to such a congregation, rather than by giving a minister to the plebeian families of the Cowgate, who might there have at this moment been working singly, and with all his might amongst them. But this, it would appear, did not suit their purpose which somehow or other is better served by the exhibition of two established ministers for fifty-six hearers, than of one established minister placed in the midst of such facilities as a rightly conducted establishment alone can secure, and doing the proper work of an establishment which is to reclaim and christianize the common people. Such a spectacle would have been gall and wormwood to certain members of the Town-Council of Edinburgh; and infinitely more delightful to them than the return of the working classes to piety and good order, more especially if the established church is to have any hand in it, is their own return of unlet sittings which themselves have manufactured, and of which themselves and their predecessors before them had created all the materials. Would they rather, we ask, that a work so glorious as the Christian education of the great mass of the people, should remain for ever undone than that it should be done by the hated hands of the established clergy? If not, why did they, in the last exertion of their ecclesiastical power, give a second minister to a congregation of 56 hearers, instead of a single minister to the destitute families of 2500

people in the Cowgate? Who made the surrender on that occasion of the best and highest interests of the common people? Surely their wish that the establishment should remain a stigmatised and hated thing must be very strong, that, rather than the removal of any blot or stigma from its brow, they could become the authors of this guilty sacrifice.

23. Before quitting this melancholy history, let me give a specimen or two of the reasonings for and against a parochial church in the Cowgate. The endless objection of unlet sittings was urged then by the Magistrates even as it is now by the Voluntaries, and as I hope shortly to evince, with as little of the strength and substance, though with the same show of argument by both. Let the Old Greyfriars' church be filled, ere we proceed to another erection in the eastern part of its parish, was the plausible cry,—to meet which I gave in the following paper, to be read at the deliberations of the Council Board, and which I now present entire to the reader, because a reasoning when directed to some particular instance is often more effective than the same reasoning when propounded in general terms. My object was to show that the number of unlet seats in the church of the Old Greyfriars was no reason against the erection of a new church for the benefit of a locality in its parish, where I had clearly ascertained that there were a thousand grown-up people, who had not taken sittings in any place of worship whatever.

"The number of *unlet* seats is no criterion for

the number of *unoccupied* seats,—it being quite certain that a very great many seats are occupied without being paid for, as is most decisively made out by the fact that the number of communicants in certain of the churches, considerably exceeds the number of recorded and rent-paying sitters.

"And, again, these unlet and low-rented seats, are, as was naturally to be looked for, the worst in the whole church; and many of them so placed that the minister can either not be seen, or not be heard from them.

"But at present I avail myself of neither of these considerations, however pertinent or powerful they might be, in reply to the number of unlet sittings, when alleged in argument against the efficiency or usefulness of the establishment in general. It is when brought forward as an argument against the special measure of a new church and parish in the Cowgate, that we have properly to do with it; and we trust to make it palpable, that even were the statistics of Mr Maclaren admitted in their full extent, and without any alleviation whatever, instead of operating against the proposed erection, they make strongly in its favour.

"Under the present system, there are three distinct causes for these unlet sittings in the existing churches, none of which can be pleaded in opposition to the measure of a new church, if in the new church none of them will be permitted to operate; nay, what is more, all of them can be pleaded in favour of the measure, if these causes are not only to be removed, but to be reversed, or, in other words, if the present adverse causes

are not only to be done away, but wholly opposite causes and opposite influences are to be substituted in their place, justifying therefore the expectation of a wholly opposite result.

"The first cause of the present unlet sittings, and more especially when they are sittings of a low rent, is that generally where the minister is least acceptable, and, consequently, the least efficient for the purpose of forming a parochial congregation, there the seat-rents are lowest. No wonder that the lowest rented sittings should be the least run upon, if there obtain an almost invariable conjunction between low-rented seats and unacceptable ministers. In the Cowgate church, it is proposed to establish a conjunction diametrically opposite to this—that is, the conjunction of low-rented seats, with the most acceptable and efficient minister that the Church of Scotland will afford.

"The second cause of the present low-rented sittings being so little in demand is, that they are the worst in the church, and a great many of them quite valueless. In the proposed Cowgate church, this cause would also be reversed. A low seat-rent will be universal; and the families of the working classes, instead of being consigned, like so many paupers, to the outskirts and extreme places of the congregation, will one and all of them be respectably accommodated, will be diffused over the whole body of the church, and form the great mass and staple of those who assemble in it.

"But the third cause is far the most important of the three, and in its moral bearings is of inestimable weight and importance. Under the present

system, the ministers, from having to do with general congregations, and from the multitude and variety of their other duties, are well-nigh dissevered from their parishes; and if a clergyman be not in circumstances for both regularly visiting and regularly preaching to the people of his own parish, the non-attendance of that people on the minister is quite unavoidable. The minister of a church in the Cowgate will come to it on the distinct understanding, that his parish is the great, we hope the only theatre of his week-day services; that for the very purpose of augmenting his influence within his assigned territory, the people who live in it are to be privileged with a right of preference for the sittings of his church; and that his distinct business is, by operating upon them in their own houses day after day, with all kind and Christian attentions, to reclaim them from those habits of Sabbath profanation into which the great majority of the common people have fallen.

"The three causes now in operation, and which account for the existing non-attendance, will thus be done away; and opposite causes, or causes acting in an opposite direction, will be substituted in their room. It is an aphorism in philosophy, that the same causes produce the same effects. And very nearly akin to, if not identical with this, is the proposition, that from contrary causes contrary effects may be anticipated."

24. The only further information that we shall now give on the subject of this proposal, is, that it was rejected by the Town-Council, on the re-

commendation of a committee who drew up an adverse report, the perusal of which I found to be very instructive. There is one paragraph in it pregnant with information, as leading us at once to perceive how utterly impossible it were, for the most Christian and efficient presbytery on earth, to administer aright for the ecclesiastical good of the city, so long as the magistrates shall have the power of imposing what seat-rents they may on the different churches. The two bodies, in fact, pull in directions altogether opposite; and never shall we attain to a soundly prosperous condition, so long as the moral and Christian objects of the presbytery shall remain in their present state of conflict and contrariety with the monied objects of the corporation. The following is the extract referred to.

"If it were proposed for adoption as a principle applicable to all the city churches, that the seat-rents should be upon a scale so low as, in a fully occupied church, would merely pay the interest of the money laid out in the building of it, and defraying the expense of repairs and other contingent charges, there would be no hesitation in saying it ought not to be agreed to."

25. The councillor of a northern burgh has avowed openly, that he did not want the Church of Scotland to be reformed, but to be destroyed; and that, therefore, the more corrupt our establishment was, it would be all the more accordant with his purposes and wishes. I will not affirm that this is the sentiment of one of the corporation, though it be in perfect keeping with a saying which

he quoted at the Council-Board, and without disapprobation at the time, "that the Church of Scotland had damned more souls than it had saved." Still I am not able to vindicate the practical course that he has taken for the fulfilment of the object that his heart is set upon, and for which the situation to which he has been preferred by his fellow-citizens, has given him peculiar advantages. His reproachful observation respecting the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, is, that it is of no further use than that of supplying sermons to ladies and gentlemen. They are he and his coadjutors in office who have reduced it to this; and, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, with them is still lodged the power of keeping it at this. At another time, he denounced the project of extending the benefits of our city establishment to the common people as an idle theory; and this it ever will be, so long as he and his colleagues shall stand up like a wall of brass, armed with the power of making it impracticable. But the Scotch are a shrewd and intelligent people, and they will be no longer at a loss to perceive on what party the burden of this obloquy ought to be laid; and, whether or not the inefficiency of our church in Edinburgh be the result of a deep and malignant policy on the part of its adversaries, with the virtual falsehood superadded of its being represented as the fruit of an ecclesiastical corruption, when, in fact, either to the craft or the tyranny of our city rulers is it altogether owing—they will at least see, that the maligned and misrepresented clergy of the metropolis are innocent of it all. We fondly hope,

indeed, that not one individual of the corporation, however unwittingly he may have been betrayed into such measures as are hurtful to the reputation of our establishment and subversive of its usefulness, is so lost to principle and honour, as deliberately to have framed and adopted them in the spirit of an infernal or Machiavelian policy. This charge we most willingly abandon; but there is another for which we can find no apology, and no palliation. They have emitted from their Council-Chamber, what in truth is the report of their own dishonour, but which most perniciously tells at the present crisis to the dishonour of that church, which they, for the enrichment of their own treasury, have done their uttermost to pervert and paralyze. A copy of that document has, I understand, been deposited with every member of the British Legislature; and it is now, if I may judge from my own correspondence, in busy circulation through all the parishes of Scotland. The emissaries of mischief have, within these few weeks, been most actively at work with it—whether employed by some of their own members or not, I have not the means of knowing. The baleful opposition of our Magistrates to the Christian education of the common people in Edinburgh, with all its consequent and accumulated mischief to the ecclesiastical state of our city, is now converted into an instrument for carrying the like mischief over the whole length and breadth of the land. And an enterprise having no other object than that of furnishing the lessons of the gospel to every neglected locality in our town, and every

unprovided hamlet in our country parishes, has been loaded with the disgrace of that wretched mal-administration, under which the cruellest enemies of our church have done all they could to weaken the establishment, and now feel themselves on vantage ground for effecting their purposes to destroy it.

26. But I must now hurry onward to a conclusion, —yet before altogether quitting the subject, I would fain address a few sentences to the people of Scotland. The power of delusion has been busily at work amongst you within these few weeks; and one of its mightiest engines, I have been made to understand, has been this document of unlet sittings issued from the Council-Chamber of Edinburgh, and sent forth in thousands and tens of thousands throughout all the corners of our land. There is another such engine, I have heard, equally mischievous, the statement of a Central Board of Voluntaries having the same object, to defeat the proposed extension of our Church—the design of which extension is neither to enrich clergymen, nor to undermine dissenters, but purely to rescue the unprovided multitudes of our increasing population from the consequences of that destitution and neglect under which they labour. The latter performance will meet its deserts in proper time. But, meanwhile, you will be able to interpret aright those widely circulated papers drawn up and offered to public view under the sanction of our city corporation. They complain of the number of the unlet seats. You will no longer wonder, when told that, one with another, they exact, overhead, no less than

13s. 3d. for each individual occupancy. It is true, as I am speaking of an average, they have many sittings lower than this, for the many they have as much higher; and a few considerably lower; but these when unlet, so absolutely valueless, as to be altogether unworthy of being occupied, or at least unworthy of being paid for. For occupied they are, and that to a great extent, beyond what they are paid for—insomuch, that we will venture to affirm of the thirteen churches in Edinburgh, that there are not thirteen continuous places of worship in all Scotland, whether of the Establishment or the Dissent, which, on the whole, are better filled; and this too, in spite of the heavy prices to which attendance upon the city churches of the metropolis is subjected. Nor is this difficult to understand. There is no town in Scotland, where, within the last fifteen years, there has been a series of better appointments, comprehending a number of clergymen who will fully match with the *elite* of any establishment or denomination in Christendom. The truth is, the Magistrates of Edinburgh know well, that, without the best men possible, their miserable system could not work at all; nor would they be able to realize one-third of their enormous seat-rent an any other terms than that of looking out, in the event of every vacancy, for the very ablest ministers whom Scotland can afford. We confidently appeal to their former parishes on this subject,—to the people of Yester, who remember Mr Wilkie; to the people of Sprouston, who remember Mr Sym; to the people of Glasgow, who remember Dr Muir and Mr Marshall; to the

people of Kinfauns, who remember Dr Gordon; to the people of Guthrie, who remember Mr Bruce; to the people of Swinton, who remember Mr Hunter; to the people of Greenock, who remember Mr Cunningham; to the people of Stenton, who remember Mr Grey; to the people of Bonhill, who remember Mr Candlish; and, lastly, for, with the power to coin and to circulate such representations, the dead are as little safe as the living, we appeal to the people of the Grampian parish, Glenisla, in whose most hallowed remembrance the saintly and apostolic Mr Martin still retains the place which his virtues and his unwearied services had earned amongst them;—we appeal to the men of one and all of these parishes, whether, in their consciences, they could ascribe the unlet sittings, that have been so paraded over the whole length and breadth of our land, to the powerlessness of the Edinburgh ecclesiastical labourers, or to the inherent, though before unexplained vices of the Edinburgh ecclesiastical system. These ministers have, each of them, been lured from their former comfortable homes, where they were surrounded by the respect and love of their parishioners; and many is the rough and adverse element which, whether from the misguided inhabitants of the city, or from the violence and vulgarity of its public functionaries, they have had to contend with. On the one hand, exposed to starvation by the non-payment, which men in high places have most disgracefully countenanced, of that which forms the all they have for the subsistence of their families; on the other, insulted and abused by these very men, because of the non-

payment of that which goes, by a process of unlawful merchandise, to the supply of their city treasury. In other words, they must not only acquiesce, without a murmur, in the loss of all that is withheld from themselves; but they must submit to be vilified in every quarter of the kingdom, unless, through their means, the Magistrates of Edinburgh shall be able to exact the uttermost farthing of their monstrous impositions on the hearers of the Established Church. Yet let me no longer speak of the injustice done to the Edinburgh clergy, while an injustice still more grievous in the eye of every philanthropist and patriot remains unredressed,—the injustice done by the Magistrates of Edinburgh to their own population. They refused a low-rented church to the families of the Cowgate; and this for the virtually expressed reason among others, that the monopoly price which they have affixed to the sittings of the other churches was in danger of being broken down by it. Driven from this field of benevolent enterprise, the men whose highest ambition was to be the moral benefactors of the working-classes in society, transferred their operations to the suburb population of the village of the Water of Leith, where they have been nobly received and encouraged by the families. By this movement, no doubt, we forfeited the advantage of an Edinburgh stipend, but rejoiced in the imagination, that, at least, we were safe from the opposition of the Edinburgh Magistrates. The sum raised for the erection of the village church is about £1500;—the free-will offering of men who have no other object than that the people there should be gathered into one paro-

chial family, and enjoy the constant attentions of a Christian minister, who should live as a friend and a father in the midst of them. But to consummate the plan, something more than a church is indispensable. The maintenance of the clergyman must be provided for from some other source than from seat-rents higher than the people can afford; and it was to obtain this, that a petition, subscribed by no less than 618 of this small but interesting locality, was sent to the Legislature in order to have some small pittance from Government for the lowering of their rents, and which would serve them instead of that Edinburgh stipend, that might have achieved the same benefit of cheap sittings for the people of the Cowgate. I would not have dwelt with such particularity on this one instance, were it not an example and a prototype for several hundreds of similar instances in Scotland. We hope to obtain the requisite churches by the subscription of benevolent individuals. But the object will be made utterly abortive, if the maintenance of the clergyman shall be altogether thrown on the seat-rents; and it is to lessen and lighten these that we want some small provision to be made from another quarter than from the means of the people themselves. This is the single object of all our petitions; and from whatever parties opposition to it might have been expected, we at least, after we had retired from their territory, thought ourselves secure against any disturbance by the rulers of Edinburgh. But that malignant genius which presides over their counsels, and under whose baleful influence their city has become a moral

desert, has broken forth, it would appear, beyond their own limits, and is now working adversely against every attempt that is being made in the country to provide a Christian ministry, under whose care, and under whose culture, we might be enabled to reclaim all the dry and deserted places of our land. People of Scotland! many are the deluded thousands amongst you who know not what ye are doing,—working against the best and highest interests of the humbler classes in society, and weakening the hands of those who have not another wish than to raise both the character and comfort of the poor man and of the labourer. But the effervescence will at length clear away; and after the mock-patriotism of these our modern reformers has made full demonstration of its hollowness and its heartlessness, the scales will fall from your eyes, and you will come to see and understand who the real friends of the common people are.

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While engaged in the composition of this pamphlet, I, by a fortunate coincidence, received the following letter from a person then altogether unknown to me, and which on reading, I could not fail to observe how seasonably, how providentially, it had come into my hands. It is from a citizen in the Old Town, confirming and illustrating, by the unvarnished tale of his own personal hardships, the mischief of the Ecclesiastical System in Edinburgh far better than I can do by any elaborate demonstration of it. I cannot withhold any part

of it from the reader, but will present it to him entire; feeling as I do, that the simple statement, given in the words of a plain but respectable workman, is of more worth, and more weight, than a thousand arguments.

*Edinburgh, April* 6, 1835.

Rev. Sir,—I have just read a pamphlet bearing your name, on "Churches and Chapels," and from the concern you show for that large portion of the community, "the handicraft," I feel persuaded that you will not take it amiss to be addressed by one of them, as I wish to tender my thanks to you for thereby furnishing me, and others of the same class, with arguments in defence of the Establishment, when assailed, as we often are, by those who differ from us. As it is my lot to have daily intercourse with many in the same grade of life with myself, you will at once see how important it is, when attacked, to be prepared to show that our ground is not just so untenable as they would have it. Yet, pleased as I am with your pamphlet, I am truly sorry to say, that your arguments are in a great measure neutralized by the fact that the seat-rents, so far from being low, are very high, and thus the precious blessings of Christ's kingdom, viz. "The poor have the gospel preached to them," have been in a great measure torn from them. Even the well-disposed poor handicraftsman, born in, nurtured by, and attached to the church, has been driven from it, and forced to seek for spiritual food elsewhere, at

a price within the compass of his means. You must be well informed on this subject already; still, I think, that the following statement of facts as regards myself, may place this much-lamented matter in a still stronger point of view. About thirty years ago, I formed a connexion with a family who had been members of, and had several sittings in, the New North Church, for I think nearly half a century; and a short time after I also joined the church, then under the charge of the good old minister, David Dickson. When he died, Mr Grey was appointed to the church; a great demand for seats was anticipated, and the church was enlarged to meet this. When Mr Grey came, we had four sittings at three shillings each. On the following term, when we went to the Cess-office to retake our seats, judge of our surprise when told they were now to be twelve shillings each. We had no previous intimation of this most unreasonable advance in the seat-rents, and it fairly put us to a stand. We thought of leaving the church, but we liked Mr Grey, and was loath to leave the church; and having put off till the time allowed was nearly expired, we even submitted and paid three pounds, for we now took five seats; and be it noted, our seat was the third from the door, and therefore ought to have been spared, or at least some mitigation of the rise allowed. But many poor people had seats near us, and not a few old widows, who had a hard struggle to scrape a living, and to whom the very walls of the church were dear, from long-cherished family and other associations of forty or fifty years. but alas, they had no

alternative but to pay or leave the kirk. Deep and loud were the lamentations when compelled to choose the latter, but all was of no avail; our civic rulers acted upon the worldly maxim, viz. every thing is worth what it will bring in the market, and they found plenty of customers for the seats, high as they were. But mark the consequence;—the parish kirk, without any great stretch of metaphor, was virtually blotted out of the parish. The plebeian portion of the congregation, or parishioners, it mattered not which, had thus their sacred patrimony filched from them by their patrician neighbours—brethren they were not—and left to go to what place of worship they pleased, or to no place at all for any thing those cared who were invested with power. No one amongst them, as far as I know, with his heart in the right place, stood up and asked in council, What is to become of the poor who cannot pay these high rents? Much akin to this was the desecration of the outer court of the temple, in the days of our Lord when on earth, the place allotted for the worship of the Gentiles, but then chiefly, if not wholly, occupied by the money-changers, dealers in cattle, &c., which was conducted with such fraud and exactions from strangers as to procure for them, from Him who knew the hearts of all men, the epithet of thieves or robbers. Yet we do not read of any one pleading the cause of the poor Gentiles on being then so basely supplanted by such characters; and if they had, the reply probably would have been, Poh, they are only Gentiles. I need not tell you, Sir, about the deceitfulness of the human

neart, nor how much of the old man lurks in our fallen nature. An eminent writer says, "I can compare it to nothing more fitly than the sea; it is sometimes as smooth as a looking-glass, but then you may be sure it is a calm; a small breeze will ruffle the surface, and in proportion as the wind rises so does the sea." Oh how it raves and rages in a moment! So sometimes the heart is smooth and quiet if it be a calm season with us; if all be well with us and about us, the heart promises mighty fair, but there frequently comes a blast of temptation, a slight, an insult, a wrong done us, and all is in an uproar at once. Sometimes a mere trifle will make the heart swell, and foam, and toss up its billows even to the clouds as it were; and is it to be wondered, Sir, that an occasion like this should tempt many to leave the church in disgust and join the dissenters? It has been said, "It is in the body politic, as in architecture, ruin is the more fatal if it begin at the bottom." I leave you to draw the inference. A year or two after the rise of the seat-rents, we wished to take the whole pew, as we occupied five seats, and the pew held six, a man having left the remaining seat whose wife sat in another place of the church; but, on applying, were told we must petition for it. I spoke to a gentleman who had recently left the Town-Council; he said he would speak to one of the Council who knew me, to support my petition, but did not think it would be of any use, as there might be a hundred petitions for twenty seats which would never be opened, so that it mattered not what the claims might be, the seats would be

given to favourites; and sure enough so it was, the seat was let to a person living at the back of the New Town. But notwithstanding all this, we still adhere to the church, for I learnt that it was rather the misfortune than the fault of the church, as the ministers had no hand in these unholy doings of raising the seat-rents. I may mention that, on removing to our present place of meeting, another sixpence was laid upon the seats, but this was what they called *equallizing* them—a very *consolatory* reason to a working man; this was taken off last term. In stating these particulars to you, Sir, I would be glad to know whether there be any possibility of the ministers obtaining a voice in fixing the seat-rents, as this great bar to filling the churches must be evident to them all, for it has been observed, "A majority of the Town-Council may happen at some future period to be unfriendly to the Establishment, and so raise the price still higher, and drive away many more."

I hope you will excuse me for occupying so much of your time. But I have taken the liberty, because I know you have great influence in the community, and the cause of the working man at heart, and will not fail to exert it for their benefit. I remain, Rev. Sir, with much respect, your very obedient servant,

STEWART BELL.

*No.* 6, *Milne's Court, Bow-Head.*

I could not have desired a clearer or more impressive statement than the one given in this letter of the Edinburgh ecclesiastical system, and the havoc made by its mischievous working on the character and habits of the general community. While we cannot but admire the strength and tenacity of principle wherewith, though at the heavy expense of £3 a-year, the writer of this communication and the members of his family still cling to the tabernacles of their fathers, we need no longer wonder, the mystery is quite dissipated, that only 727 individuals out of above 28,000, being the population of the Old Town, should have seats taken in all the Established Churches of the city. But while we cannot sufficiently deplore this great moral calamity, what shall we think of the recklessness of its authors who would lay upon the heads of others, beside themselves, the burden and disgrace of that sore evil which their own hands have inflicted?

I cannot adequately express the satisfaction and the delight which I felt when, on inquiring into the situation of Mr Stewart Bell, I made the discovery that he was an operative journeyman in the shop of a silver-plate worker. Edinburgh will never be restored to a right ecclesiastical condition, till its Establishment is restored to its proper and legitimate functions by each parish church becoming what it originally was, the rightful inheritance and common good of its own parish families. Would that the great majority of all our Old Town congregations consisted of the operatives and journeymen of Edinburgh, each in his own well-filled family

pew. The ladies and gentlemen of the New Town can shift for themselves.*

* For the process by which to reach this blissful consummation, we again refer to the "Right Ecclesiastical Economy of a Large Town."

We trust that we have not incurred even the appearance of disrespect to the affluent and existing seat-holders of our Edinburgh churches. It is true that in as far as they are extra-parochial, they occupy their places by usurpation. The usurpation, however, is not their deed but that of the Magistrates, who in the first instance have assumed the church room as their property, and in the second, compel the most extravagant prices for the use of it. When we say of our affluent seat-holders that they can shift for themselves, we mean that the same wealth which is competent to the payment of their high seat-rents is competent to the erection and endowment of churches for their most ample and honourable accommodation. The annual sum of £7000 a-year from seat-rents, which now enters into the coffers of the city corporation, were, if not so appropriated, a sufficient guarantee for the provision of ten new churches, with all their annual expenses, including the maintenance of the clergymen.

# APPENDIX.

## No. I.

### OBJECTION TO THE BUILDING OF ADDITIONAL CHURCHES, ON THE GROUND THAT THE EXISTING CHURCHES ARE NOT ALL FILLED

In consequence of this objection having been lately reiterated in high quarters, it has been thought proper to reprint a correspondence on the subject of it, which appeared in the Edinburgh Advertiser of the 17th of February.

*To the Editor of the Edinburgh Advertiser.*

*February 12th*, 1835.

Dear Sir,—The objection to our Assembly Scheme for Church Accommodation, grounded on the number of unoccupied seats in our existing churches, is one so generally felt, and which meets us so frequently, and in every possible form, that it were well if the proper reply to it could be so given as to be thoroughly understood. This, perhaps, might be done more effectively by means of a brief and familiar letter, written on the impulse of an unlooked-for occasion, than by any more formal and elaborate exposition of the argument in question. May I therefore request an insertion in your columns of the following correspondence. I shall be happy if it be the means not only of doing away the objection, but of suggesting to the friends of our cause how desir-

able a preparation it is, for the success of every new erection, that there should be the previous working of a Home Missionary among the families of the locality for which it is destined. Without a living agency of this sort, the enterprise, in many instances, will fail, and the mortifying spectacle of many desolate or half-filled pews would convince us that something more than the mere architecture of new places of worship is indispensable to restore a habit of church-going among our people. I am, dear Sir, yours truly

THOS. CHALMERS.

*To the Rev.* DR CHALMERS.

*Edinburgh, 15th January,* 1835.

SIR,—The Incorporation (in the nature of a Friendly Society,) of which I am the Treasurer, are possessed of a couple of pews in the Canongate Old Church, affording seventeen sittings, and as you have taken a lively interest in measures for the increase of Church Accommodation, I take the liberty of addressing this note to you.

The sittings in question have lately afforded to the Society's funds very little indeed, but as you and your coadjutors may not be aware that accommodation to that extent may be had, I venture to offer them on very moderate terms, I may say lower than can be had in any other church in town, Established or Dissenting. Requesting the favour of a reply, I beg to subscribe myself your most obedient humble servant,

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To this Letter the following reply was sent :—

*Jan.* 17, 1835.

SIR,—You seem to have misconceived the object of our Committee, and also the means of its accomplishment.

We do not look for a larger attendance upon religious worship from the mere increased supply of Church Accommodation.

There must also be an increased demand for it, which last requisite can only be brought about by a more thorough and efficient pastoral superintendence.

On this principle, I should expect that if the Canongate were cut down into three or four parishes, all its three or four churches would be better filled, by the efforts of zealous clergymen, having each a field of management which he could overtake, than your present one church with its unwieldy parish ever will, or ever can be, in its present circumstances.

This may, perhaps, appear a paradox to you, but I shall give you an experimental verification of it. The Water of Leith district in the West Kirk parish, has a population of from 1400 to 1500. Yet only 150 of them have sittings anywhere, and 67 of them are in the Establishment. Along with this there are empty or half empty pews in the West Kirk; but had we waited till these were filled, or till the two ministers of 70,000 people had, by their assiduous week-day attentions in the Water of Leith, infused a taste and a desire for church-going among its families, we should have waited for ever. But we took another way of it. We set a parish missionary amongst them, who can give his whole time to the work, and who, by his unwearied ministrations among the sick, and the dying, and the ignorant, and the young, has created such a demand for Sabbath attendance, that his preaching-hall, which holds 300, is filled to an overflow; and we feel encouraged to build a church (to be set about immediately,) in the confident hope that many hundreds, who till now have been living in heathenism, will be reclaimed to the good old habits of their forefathers.

It was on this principle that I should have raised a church in the Cowgate had the Magistrates let me. But they seem disposed to wait till the Old and New Greyfriars churches are filled, in which case also they may have to wait for ever, and the Cowgate remain as great a moral desert as before.

I am happy to inform you, that there are at least forty such enterprises going on at present in Scotland as the one in the Water of Leith, a prospectus of which I take the liberty of sending to you. It is possible that the offer could have been made in several instances where the additional places of worship are now building,

of pews unoccupied or pews unlet,—such an offer, in fact, as you, Sir, have made to me and to my coadjutors. I am very glad that if such an offer has been made, it has not arrested them in their undertakings, any more than the proposition which you have submitted to us will arrest us in ours.

Permit me to say, that I am not sure what interpretation I should put upon your letter, and whether it proceeds from a friendly or unfriendly hand. On either supposition it is our duty to move through good report or bad report; and if what I have now written shall have the effect either of confirming a friend or conciliating an adversary, I shall feel that the trouble of this communication has not been thrown away. I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

(Signed) THOMAS CHALMERS.

P. S.—Dr Chalmers has met so often with the misconception which seems to have originated Mr ———'s letter, that he proposes to insert both that letter and his own reply to it, in an early newspaper. And he begs to know whether Mr ——— will permit the publication of his name.*

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## No. II.

In the various propositions which have been made for a new-modelling of the ecclesiastical revenues in the city of Edinburgh, the real use of an endowment has been seldom if ever recognised. Nothing could tend more powerfully to defeat all the purposes of an establishment, than to blend together the produce of the annuity-tax with the produce of the seat-rents for the maintenance of the clergyman, leaving at the same time an arbitrary power in any quarter to raise the seat-rents at pleasure, and more especially if this power be lodged in the hands of a party interested in bringing down the fund for endowment as far as possible. Indeed the proposal at one time was to take from the Edinburgh minis-

* There has been no reply to this communication.

ters their old and stable endowments altogether, and give them the produce of seat-rents in place. In other words, there was to be wrested from them that fund which has been their own for many generations; and by virtue of which, each of the city clergymen might, but for the arbitrary proceedings of the town-council, become the minister indeed, and without any burden on the lower orders, of all his parish families. And they would make over in exchange that other fund which themselves have unlawfully extorted from the community, the produce of their own hated toll-gates—a fund charged with all sorts of odium and heart-burning, and with the still more fearful evil of banishing from the churches of the Establishment the general population of Edinburgh. By acts and actings of their own, they have smitten all our city churches with the impotency of the Voluntary system; and they at one time wished to perpetuate this impotency, and to make it irreversible by an act of parliament. It is no reply to this that they did not mean absolutely to annihilate the fund by endowment; and that they only meant to lessen it by compounding therewith the produce of seat-rents, so as out of both to make a living for the clergyman. The effect, it will be perceived, is the same. The object of this whole movement would have been to bring the annuity as far down as possible, and this can only be effected by bringing the seat-rents as far up as possible. In either way the churches in Edinburgh would have been bereft of the peculiar virtue which belongs to an establishment. A cheap Christian education to the lower orders, we mean cheap to the lower orders themselves, would have become a thing unknown and a thing impossible. The people would have been made over to the tender mercies of the Voluntary system, and with the effect of driving almost all of the lowest grades in society to the outfields of heathenism—not to be recovered thence by their parish clergymen, all whose attentions would have to be given to their own general congregations, on whom then would be all their dependance. The goodly arrangements of the parochial system would have been conclusively broken up; and an evil begun by the government of the city, would have been consummated and made everlasting by the government of the State.

It should be observed, that there is one method of compounding a seat-rent with an endowment for the maintenance of the clergyman, which is not liable to this exception. If a maximum of seat-rents be fixed for the greater part of the church, and the remaining part be left to fetch its market-price, let that maximum be low enough, and then, consistently with a cheap church accommodation for the common people, might there still a considerable revenue be raised from the seat-rents, either to help the endowment, or for other ecclesiastical and educational objects in the parish. In towns we should not object if two-thirds of the sittings were let at an average not exceeding 3s. each, and with a strict preference to the parishioners, although the remaining third were exposed first to parochial and then to general competition at such prices as they could bring. This is what we have proposed should be done with our new churches, so that the income of the clergyman would, like that of the schoolmaster, arise partly from endowment, and partly from the payments of those who attend him.

So much for the method of paying clergy out of the seat-rents. There was another form of it proposed to the Presbytery of Edinburgh by the Town Council, a good many months ago, and to which I must confess a very strong disinclination, that they should give up their endowment, and be paid out of the common good of the city—a peculiar phrase, but not unknown to the people of towns in Scotland, being the treasure or treasury of the corporation, denominated the common good, for what reason, I know not; because, rather than a centre of generous and widespread emanation, the great part which it performs, as far as I can perceive, is that of an absorbent, ravenous and devouring as the grave, which is never satisfied. One instance, I happen to know well, of a certain house and garden which belonged to the professor of divinity, for which, had it continued at his own disposal, he might have realised several hundred pounds a-year; but in lieu of this, they gave him, in the name of house-rent, £36, and the remainder I have searched for, but searched in vain, among the depositories and hidden depths of that great whirlpool the common good. Of late, several of our university salaries have come within the vortex of this most tremendous suction.

and shot from their spheres. Indeed, it was much about a year ago, that expecting my own salary as usual to be at its Whitsunday perigee, I stretched forth my hand for it, but was told that it too had gone forth with the rest of them upon their circulation, and it remains uncertain whether, as the period comes round again, they will come within our reach; or after, perhaps, a few revolutions, we shall lose sight of them, for ever ingulfed in the eddy of the common good. The question of the Theological fees has been more than once agitated within the walls of the General Assembly. Should it ever be revived, there is one element of the deliberation, which I trust will not be forgotten; and that is the sufferings of the professor in the highest and most honourable of all capacities, the capacity of a martyr to the common good. But, to pass on from mere illustrations to the case in point, it is not very many years ago since the City Corporation took the whole produce of the annuity to themselves, and then made over but a fraction of it to the city clergy; and this act of taking one part in of what belongs to the ministers for their own behoof, they call paying the other part out of the common good. But all these I hold to be pigmy instances compared with the gigantic mischief of the one given in the text; and by which, for the sake of a revenue from seat-rents, the common people of our city have been driven to the wilds of paganism, and the best interests of thousands of families have been thrown into one mighty hecatomb on the altar of this common good. My friends of the corporation, and I have experienced both kindness from many and courteousness from all, will understand, that while under the painful necessity of telling all that truth and the justice of the cause require of me, it is without the slightest mixture either of ill-will or disrespect individually to any of them. The truth is, that when, from the principles of the question, I turn me to the persons who have to do with it, I try to relieve myself by all sorts of good-natured imaginations—such as the necessities of their position, or their peculiar notions on the subject of civic patriotism; or what perhaps is likeliest of all, they may be the disciples, along with some other estimable men, of the utilitarian system of morals—the leading principle of which we know is the suppression or sacrifice of all private and particular interests to

the common good. But without theorizing any more on the views of our opponents, I trust that enough has been said for the practical vindication of our own; and that the public will not find us in an error, because we are not willing that the clergy of Edinburgh should be paid out of the general city fund, and still less willing to exchange with their corporation the produce of the annuity for the produce of seat-rents; or, in other words, are not willing that the clergy henceforth shall be supported from the proceeds of a most pernicious extortion, and give up that fund which robs no man, which no man can withhold from them without himself incurring the guilt of robbery, and all for the evident purpose, too, or at least with the certain effect, that the corporation might virtually take it to themselves.

After all, the most desirable reformation of any is, that a similar commutation should be effected of the annuity-tax in Edinburgh, that has been proposed for the tithes of England and Ireland. It should be altogether transferred from occupiers to owners, so that instead of the irritations and the heart-burnings which have so distempered the relation that should obtain between the city clergymen and the great mass of the inhabitants, the payment of stipend might be as much a matter of certainty and quietness as the payment of a feu-duty or ground-rent.

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## No. III.

The following is an extract from the legal opinion of Mr (now Lord) Moncrieff, given in 1823.

"I am clearly of opinion that the Magistrates have no right to levy seat-rents for the increase of the general revenues of the city, or for any purpose, except for the support of the Ecclesiastical Establishment itself."

No. V.

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# RE-ASSERTION

OF THE

# EVILS

OF THE

# EDINBURGH

# SYSTEM OF SEAT-LETTING.

WITH

## NEW PROOFS

ADAPTED TO RECENT OBJECTIONS.

# RE-ASSERTION

OF

# THE EVILS

OF THE

# EDINBURGH SYSTEM OF SEAT-LETTING.

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Mr Adam Black has not at all mended the case. Nothing has been said that sensibly extenuates, or, still less, that casts a doubt over the reality of that great practical evil which we have tried to demonstrate—whatever the defects or the blemishes which might be alleged against our representation of it. The great mass of the families in the Old Town of Edinburgh have been ejected from their own parish churches by the cruel hand of power. This, we re-assert, is the mischief that has been inflicted on the people by the hands of their own magistrates; and all that has been yet told us in the way of palliation, is but the mockery of redress—not justice, but the hollow and unsubstantial semblance of it.

And, first, in regard to the preference of the parishioners in the letting of seats, I should certainly have been at pains to ascertain whether there had been any distinct or authoritative statute-law upon the subject; but I held it enough

to state what I then believed, and still believe to be true, that such a law had been little acted on, that the public at large had no distinct or confident understanding of it, and that *if ever proclaimed as a rule*, or given as an instruction—practically, it was of no effect. On the consideration of an inoperative preference, I did not think it worth while to dwell; because I felt that all the good of such an arrangement, even had it been most rigidly acted on, was defeated by the operation of another cause, which, of itself, hath effected an almost entire disruption between the plebeian parishes of the city and their respective clergymen, that is, the extravagant seat-rents. But there are a few low seat-rents, behind which the vindicators of the Town Council make their retreat from our charges; and from which, however, it will not be difficult to unferret them, though at the trouble of some explanation both for the author and his readers. Let us see then what this preference amounts to. In regard to the vast majority of the sittings, the plebeian hearers, for whose interest alone I appear in this controversy, can have little or no benefit. These sittings, in the great and general bulk of them, are hopelessly beyond their reach, more especially for ought like family occupation; and a preference for any article is of no value, when the price is such, that we should never think of aspiring after it. And then, coming down to the low-priced sittings, it is not enough for us to state, that these are very few, and therefore not worthy of being made to figure at all in any general argument; but the conclusive

demonstration against them is, that it is of little or no consequence their price being low, seeing the article is almost or altogether worthless. A preference is of no value, save when there is a competition; and accordingly the pauper sittings of the High Church, the retired corners of the Tolbooth, the unseeing and unhearing places of the College Church—these, and the sittings similar to these in the other churches, are unlet. The preference here is of no value, just because the article is of no value. In regard to the high sittings, their price alone wards off from them the parishioners of the working classes; and in regard to the low sittings, they are equally warded off by the utter worthlessness of the article. Between them the value of the preference is annihilated to the artisans and labourers in the parishes of Edinburgh, —excluded by the high price when the thing is worth the having, and certainly not invited by the low price when the thing is not worth the having. Let us see two-thirds of the sittings in every church held forth at an average of three shillings each; and then the preference to parishioners would be really worth the talking of,—for it would prove a main instrument for the restoration of the parochial system to Edinburgh. But as matters stand, it is adding insult to injustice to tell us of a preference, either for the many high-priced sittings, which, because of their cost, workmen cannot, or for the low-priced sittings, which, because of their inconvenience and meanness, they will not take. It is only when the price is low enough, and the article good enough, that a preference comes into play;

and in the present instance, speaking mainly and generally, either one or other of these indispensable qualifications is wanting. Till both be conjoined, and that too in sufficient number, this boasted preference can be of no sensible advantage to the great body of parishioners in the Old Town of Edinburgh. Let it not then be taken advantage of, as a loop-hole of escape by those who have bereft the people of their rights, and would now put them off with the jugglery of a name.

But, again, we are told, that there is not only the advantage of a preference, but the advantage of a lower price held out to parishioners. This I was quite aware of, and have upon one occasion adverted to it,*—though from its practical insignificance in point of effect, or of real accommodation to the people of the Old Town parishes, I have not given to the abatement in their favour that notice or that place of prominency and high consideration which has been claimed for it. But let us now see what it really amounts to. There is, first, the abatement of one shilling to parishioners in certain of the Old Town parishes on all sittings, at or beneath five shillings; in other words, a reduction in the price of such sittings as, in greater part, are worth no price at all,—a cheapening of the whole of that church-room about which my informer probably exaggerated, when he represented it as not fit for a dog, but which certainly is not fit for a hearer; such seats, in fact, that according to the report of my friend, Mr

* "The Evils of the Edinburgh System of Seat-letting," p. 195.

Marshall, his parishioners declared, "that they would rather continue occupying seats where they could find them, than pay for sittings so disadvantageously situated as they found those to be which were to be had at such prices as they could afford." But let us go upward from these to the higher sittings, on which there is an abatement of two shillings to parishioners, and we shall soon, very soon, in our midway passage through the seats to be had by them at four shillings and five shillings, come to the great majority even of the church-room in the Old Town; and find, that notwithstanding this abatement, it, to all sense, is as inaccessible to the general population as before. I call it an intolerable oppression, that Mr Stewart Bell, a journeyman silver plater, should have to pay twelve shillings a-year for each of his five sittings, or three pounds upon the whole; and that, too, in a pew so far back as to be only three from the door; and from which, by the way, we may judge what the quality or attraction of the pews might be which are at inferior prices. The reduction of this enormous seat-rent for a workman to ten shillings a sitting, would scarcely have been felt by me as any alleviation; and I should have denounced it as an intolerable oppression still. Between the low and worthless sittings, too dear at any price, upon the one hand, and the commodious but high sittings, which, after the abatement, are still greatly too high for the working classes, upon the other, —we wonder not, that in parishes composed almost entirely of the working classes, the abatement should have been so little called for; and, accord-

ingly, the whole of this boasted relief that has been granted to parishioners of the Old Town for the last twelvemonth, amounts to £8, 13s. But the rule of the abatement for the New Town still more strikingly demonstrates with what skill, and at the same time with what safety to the funds of the corporation, the whole of this abatement scale has been constructed. In those Old Town churches to which this regulation applies, the abatement in behalf of parishioners on the higher sittings is universal, taking place at all prices. But in the New Town churches, it ceases when the price of these sittings exceeds 15s. each. The truth is, that in these Old Town parishes, poor and plebeian as they are, very few indeed of the parishioners can afford to enter their churches at a rent above five shillings; so that an unexcepted abatement in their favour on all prices higher than this, is but a mere show of relief to the great body of the parochial families. Whereas in the wealthy New Town parishes, the great majority of the parochial hearers sit, and indeed must sit, at a rent higher than 15s.; there being only 1140 sittings at prices of from 6s. to 15s. inclusive, whereas there are 4326 at prices above 15s. In other words, the abatement on the higher prices is declared to be unlimited in favour of parishioners to those churches where *few or no* parishioners can receive the benefit of it; but carefully limited in those other churches, where *many*, without such limitation, would have received the benefit of it. And, accordingly, the whole of this pompous and paraded abatement for all the parochial hearers of Edinburgh, both in the New

and Old Town, came last year to £24, 19s.* In the abatement itself, there is nothing wrong; and sorry should we be to detract one jot or tittle from any paltry credit which is due to it. But abatement though it be, it must become our complaint, and not our congratulation, when the use that is made of it is to gloss over what is wrong; or when employed as an instrument in the hands of a little reasoner, who, by dint of a wretched pettifogging, can manage to cast an obscuration over the large view that should be taken of the question, and so to blind the public eye against the deep and wholesale injustice that has been done to the commonalty of Edinburgh. The first and faintest symptoms of a returning conscience should be hailed; and the pettiest acts of restitution, more especially on the part of heirs for a wrong done by their predecessors, should be thankfully and liberally acknowledged—but not when accompanied with a systematic vindication of the wrong, or with the intimation that in its main and general character it was to be perpetuated. This abatement, even this humble and fractionary abatement, were not to be despised but to be rejoiced in, had we been permitted to regard it as a tribute to principle, or as the pledge of a large and effectual reform; but not

* Why should it after all have come to an amount so paltry? for surely there are as many parochial hearers in Edinburgh, even at the rents on which the abatement is due, as to have made up a larger sum for abatements upon the whole. Is it that they only receive the abatement who claim it; and that unless they make themselves known as parishioners, the privilege is withheld from them? If this be the solution, it is in harmony with the fact, that other decrees of the Council, as that of the parochial preference for example, may for some time have passed, and long before being understood or acted upon by the public at large.

when made use of to palliate or rather to purchase toleration for a crying evil, not when turned into an auxiliary on the side of abuse, or for bolstering up the policy of men who strain at a gnat while they swallow a camel.

But a single example is often of more effect than whole pages of general reasoning. I therefore felt my plea to have been prodigiously strengthened by the case of Mr Stewart Bell. The following communication, received about a fortnight ago, will perform the same service for me, and show far better than any words or arguments of mine, how unabated the real and practical hardships of the common people are under all the abatements that have been provided for them by the Town-Council of Edinburgh.

"In the above district there is a case highly illustrative of the operation of the present system. The individual referred to is a widow, aged eighty-two, residing in a single room of a top flat of a stair in the Castlehill. She continued to be a member of the New North Church for about fifty years. During the first fifteen years of that period she occupied a sitting for which she paid *four* shillings. At the end of that period her sitting was raised to eight; and she continued to pay that sum for the next fifteen years. At the end of the thirty years her sitting was again raised to twelve shillings: and even this sum she continued to pay, though with *great* difficulty, for ten years. At that time, partly from the difficulty which she found in paying the twelve shillings, and partly from the distance to which the church was removed, (to

Nicolson Square,) she ceased to take a seat. Since then, however, she has continued a *regular sitter* in Mr Marshall's. She is quite alive to all the disagreeable feelings connected with not being in possession of a seat which she can call her own, and although she does not think it consistent with her duty to offer again twelve shillings, she professes her perfect willingness still to give six or even eight shillings for a seat in the Tolbooth, *provided she could get one where she could hear the minister.* Such a seat, however, though labouring under no defect of hearing except what necessarily arises in every instance from the advance of years, she *cannot* obtain."*

We shall now know how to estimate the preamble in the act of the Town Council, or rather in the adopted recommendation of their committee, to ordain those abatements on which so much of the vindication of their system has been made to rest. This preamble is as follows:—"In order to accomplish, as far as practicable, the desire of the Council, that the petitioners should be enabled to obtain seats in their respective parish churches, and that the seat-rents should be accommodated to their respective circumstances, so as not to prove a barrier to the admission of any, even the poorest of the people."† And the Town Council accord-

* This communication is from the Rev. John Thomson, 2, East Broughton Place. The name of the aged and respectable person herself is not given from obvious considerations of delicacy towards one who is constrained by dire necessity, in opposition to all her better feelings, to occupy a seat without a legal right of occupation.

† "The Church its own Enemy," by Mr Adam Black, p. 35.

ingly resolved, that, "as it is an object of great importance to encourage church-going habits among the lower classes, if it shall be found that the number of seats set apart for their accommodation is inadequate to meet the demand, any additional number that may be required shall be reduced and set apart for their accommodation."* Now nothing can be more full of promise to the ear than all this; but let the public look narrowly and not superficially as heretofore to the actual working of the actual system now in living operation. Let them attend first to the real practical grievance suffered by the common people of Edinburgh at the hands of its Town Council on the one side, and then to the remedy devised for them by the same Town Council upon the other. The thing complained of is, that the sittings *which are worth the having* are, in the great bulk of them, only to be had at a price much too high for the circumstances of the general population—so high, in fact, that the abatement upon these in favour of parishioners does not nearly bring them within reach of the families of our workmen. And the answer to this is, that there are certain other sittings to the amount of so many hundreds at low enough prices; and low enough, in all conscience, we admit, if the sittings were but good enough, or if the people who have a taste for their own convenience and their own respectability could be induced to pay for them any price at all. The

* This last extract is given on the authority of a recent statement by the Central Board of Scottish Dissenters, p. 6.

thing wanted is commodious church-room at a moderate price. The Town-Council tell us that if the number of seats set apart for the accommodation of the lower classes is inadequate to meet the demand, any additional number that may be required shall be reduced and set aside for their accommodation. In other words, the commodious church-room will then be brought down to a moderate price—yes, *but not till the incommodious church-room has all been previously taken.* Who does not see here that the bringing down of the good seats is suspended on a condition which never has been, which never will be fulfilled—on the bad seats being all previously occupied and paid for? In other words, we shall give you Mr Stewart Bell, and you the old and venerable matron who occupies a single room of a top flat of a stair in the Castlehill—we shall give each of you your twelve shilling articles even at half price, if you can first prevail on your townsmen and acquaintances to take off our hands so many hundreds of our three and four and five shilling articles which are not worth a sixpence. And this is what they call accommodating their seat-rents to their circumstances, so that they shall not prove a barrier to the accommodation of any even the poorest of the people. Why, these low-rented seats are nothing else than a barrier. Instead of so many open portals for the admittance of the poor into our churches, they have barricaded all round the entrance against them into such places as either rich or poor have any value for. These pauper and low-priced sittings which the Town Council

of Edinburgh point their finger to, as the evidence of their great desire to encourage church-going habits among the poor, when viewed in their true character and tendency, are but so many scarecrows for scaring them away. They serve not as a stepping-stone to our churches for the parochial population, but in truth as a parapet of defence against their inroads. They form a sort of cordon for the protection of the city revenue—a wall of circumvallation, as it were, by which the people are kept from breaking in so numerously as to bring down the monopoly price which the magistrates have set on the goodly places of the interior. It is thus that a plebeian aspirant after a fair ordinary seat, but who has only a plebeian price to pay for it, is most effectually debarred under the actual system from becoming a seat-holder at all. The answer given to him in effect is, Before you can be admitted to the good church-room here at the price you can afford—you and the people of your class must first occupy and pay for all the bad church-room there, which is now lying vacant and at a price you can afford. These sittings, poor and worthless as they are to all the world beside, are nevertheless of great value in effect to the city corporation; and could I believe, which I do not, that the effect was foreseen and calculated, I might further say, that from the double purpose which these sittings serve, they were exactly suited to the designs of a policy of which duplicity and low cunning were the characteristics. In respect of being low-priced, they can be appealed to as evidence of a merciful consideration for the

poor. In respect of their being not worth any price, but still with the condition affixed to them that they must all be taken ere the other sittings are reduced, they do in fact sustain a cruel and oppressive monopoly against the lower classes of society. We speak of effects and not of motives. Our object is not to characterize the magistrates, but to assert, and, if possible, recover the rights of the common people—to obtain plenty of good berths in church for them at prices which they can pay, and not put them off with so many bad berths at prices which they can but wont pay—to release them, in short, from the mockery of a system which bears the aspect of being framed on the principle and with the purpose of letting them all in, yet in reality with the inevitable effect of keeping them all out, at least of keeping out from the great and general body of our Old Town churches the great and general mass of their parochial families.*

An entertainment, a feast, might be proposed to a thousand people, with all the good dishes on moderate terms, but having this servitude annexed to it, that there are so many bad or nauseous dishes on very low terms; and that unless a hundred of the company are to be found who will engage with the worse fare, the better fare will be kept back

* The general worthlessness of the low-priced sittings will have the effect of repelling *generally*. And yet there may be a few individuals whom the strength of their principle and their poverty together may have constrained to be the anomalous payers as well as occupiers of this refuse accommodation. If there be even one such, logicians of a certain cast are to be met with who would point to that one as a sufficient and satisfactory reply to this whole reasoning.

from the remaining nine hundred, and reserved on better and higher prices for another and a distinct party of applicants altogether. Who does not see that the landlord might easily get quit of all his plebeian customers in this way; and when they are off the field have none but patrician customers to deal with—with whom, if he can only make his own terms for the eatables of his preparation, he will take care not to press the uneatables upon them? But these very uneatables, worthless though they be in themselves, are nevertheless of great worth and service to the master of the festival. They secure for him his monopoly price, by enabling him to exchange the worse for the better market. A man might be prevailed on to swallow a bitter potion, if it was to purchase for himself the subsequent enjoyment of a good and satisfactory repast. But the difficulty is to get one hundred men, who, not that themselves, but that nine hundred others shall be comfortably regaled, will submit to the same ordeal, and pay for it to the bargain. Now, the difficulty that, to make out the preliminary disposal of the noxious and unpalatable draught, there would be in getting so many vicarious cup-bearers for the good of others—is the very difficulty that, to make out the preliminary disposal of the noxious and unpalatable church-room, stands in the way of getting so many vicarious and self-denying seat-holders for the good of others. We cannot find so many hundreds among the operatives of the city to occupy and pay for the worthless sittings, in order that as many thousands individually distinct from themselves,

though of the same class of population, should be admitted to the good sittings on cheap and practicable terms. And so the common people of Edinburgh are kept out; and the magistrates are left to pocket their monopoly price, with the credit at the same time of being very kind to these common people; and the ladies and gentlemen have all the good room of the city churches to themselves.

This will explain an otherwise puzzling discrepancy which obtains between the statements of two different bodies, greatly too respectable for any wilful mis-statement on any subject whatever, the Town-Council of Edinburgh on the one hand, and the Kirk-Sessions of Edinburgh upon the other—the one affirming that there are more sittings at adequately low prices, even for the poorest of the families, than there is any demand for, nay, that they are ready to make further reduction so soon as the present supply of low-priced sittings is exhausted; and the other affirming as strenuously, and therefore complaining loudly, that the high prices form a let and a grievous impediment in the way of a general attendance on the churches of the Establishment, and more especially by the common people. The mystery is dissipated when we come to individual converse upon the subject with any of the city clergymen. Mr Marshall's great desideratum, for example, is not that the worthless sittings of his church should be made lower by any abatement upon them for the seeming benefit of the poor in his parish; but that there shall be a great and general reduction in the price of the good sittings for his respectable parishioners,

or rather for the attendance *en masse* of his parochial families. This is the way of disentangling the perplexity; and we trust that henceforward the public will clearly understand, how it is not by a few scantlings of pauper accommodation, that the magistrates of Edinburgh will acquit themselves of the justice which we demand from them; but that for a right and well-conditioned economy of things, we hold it indispensable, that the great bulk and body of the seat-rents in every parish church should be adapted to the circumstances of the great bulk and body of the residenters in its parish.

But there is a third act of liberality on the part of the Town-Council that has been stated in opposition to our charges; and a very few words will suffice for expressing our acknowledgment of what this amounts to. They have reduced the seat-rental of somewhere about £9000 by £493, 2s. 6d. The reader will understand by this, not that the sum actually received by the Town-Council, but that the sum which would be yielded, if the seats were fully let and all paid for, is now less by £493, 2s. 6d. in virtue of the now lower prices that are set upon them by the magistrates. I have not the least disposition to make any abatement on the credit due for this liberality, but to recognise it at all that it is worth. In the absence, however, of the necessary documents, I feel myself at liberty to imagine that part of this reduction is owing to the circumstance, that on the preceding year they had over-estimated the number of their sittings—having assigned, for example, 55 too many to St

Stephen's, 30 too many to St Mary's, 32 too many to St George's, and no less than 70 too many to St Andrew's. I have confined this research to the New Town churches; and I presume, that when all these over-estimated sittings, with their rentals, were struck off, there would be a corresponding reduction in the rental upon the whole. I speak in ignorance on this point; and also on the question, in what particular description of seats, and in what churches, the reduction was made, for it were perfectly safe, and might infer no loss whatever, to make a reduction on the price of the refuse sittings—just as the tradesman who takes stock, does not make himself really, but only nominally, a poorer man than he was last year, although he should make any reduction he pleases in his estimated price of the articles that nobody will buy, or strike them off from his inventory altogether. But I am quite ashamed to make these paltry observations on a thing in itself so paltry; and more especially as it is clear that an actual diminution of revenue has been sustained in virtue of the somewhat reduced rental—there having been an increase of let sittings, we rejoice to observe, to the extent of 392, and yet in spite of this increase, a decrease of revenue consequent on the reduction in the rental of £7, 18s. 11d. This is a clear evidence, as far as it goes, of the present Town-Council having done better than their predecessors; and we have nowhere asserted that, in respect of pecuniary exactions for seats or any thing else, they have in any one instance done worse. Our charge on this particular ground, is

not against the present Town-Council as contrasted with their predecessors, but against the Town-Council for many years back, and of course against many distinct generations of Town-Councillors. The plausibility of the opposition which has been set up against us all hangs on the imagination, that our main attack was directed against the existing Town-Council as compared with previous ones; when, of course, every little superiority on the part of the present administration over the past, would have told conclusively to the discomfiture of the cause that we had adopted, had this been indeed our argument. But, in truth, our main attack is on a system which began many years ago, which may have vacillated slightly from one year to another; but which, in the length and breadth of it, is, to all sense, and to every practical purpose, as injurious now to the moral interests of the community as it ever was.* But the present Council stands distinguished from its predecessors as one of pretence, and promise, and great profession; and it is on this ground that we have lifted, and shall ever continue to do so, the fearless front of remonstrance when these professions are not substantiated. When an unflinching advocate of the rights of the common people comes before them, it is precisely because they are a reformed Town-

* There has a scantling of *real good* been done lately by the Council for the Tron Church parish; and it is because only a scantling that we have forborne hitherto to acknowledge it—for, ambitious as we are of a wholesale reform in this department of our civic affairs, we are fearful of ministering in the least to such a sense of satisfaction in the doing of small things as might cause the great things to be left undone.

Council that they must expect to be all the more closely reckoned with. And it is in this spirit, and not without the hope of a favourable hearing, that I venture to enter with them a second time on the question of a plebeian church in the Cowgate.

But let me not forget that I am dealing with a *corporation ;* and that in the composition of such a product, the results of what may be termed a moral chemistry in the world of mind are often not less marvellous than those of the physical chemistry in the world of matter—where the properties of the compound are often wholly different from, nay, opposite to the properties of each of the single ingredients in a state of separation. It is thus that I would distinguish between the body and its constituent parts ; and though I must, at all hazards, and for the sake of justice, characterize the doings of the municipality, and expatiate in full on the mischief of these doings ; this I know, for in myself I feel, to be consistent with the utmost kindliness and respect for the individual members of it. In a gregarious or corporate movement, there are a thousand misleading influences at work, which in the private relations of life, have no place or operation. There is the difficulty of casting off the authority of precedents. There is the slow and insensible progress of abuse to which each distinct race of functionaries, by moving almost unconsciously in the track of their predecessors, may have contributed so small a share as to make each living man of them scarcely responsible at all ; and most certainly not responsible for the whole evil accumu-

lated in the course of generations: And then it should be recollected that it is not for any personal interest of their own, but for the common good of the city, however erroneous their views of it may be, that they are all the while devising. I could have added to this list of palliatives the prodigious moral courage that one must have, and which is so rarely to be found, ere, in the capacity of an individual reformer, he will denounce a mal-practice sanctioned by antiquity, or face the overwhelming majorities which are arranged upon its side; but what deprives the present Town-Council of this particular apology is, that they entered office on the principle of casting off the trammels of antiquity; and so they began with almost all of them being reformers and denouncers together. It is this which throws them open to a scrutiny and a challenge, and, if so be, a condemnation, that one would never have thought of laying upon their predecessors. It is just because we hear so much from them of the name of reform, that we are tempted all the more loudly to call upon them for the thing; and more especially, to feel the awakenings within us of an honest indignation, if we can detect in any of their proceedings a heartless and a lordly indifference to the rights of the common people. The flagrant injury which we have laboured to expose, done by the rulers of Edinburgh to the moral well-being of its plebeian families, was begun by their predecessors, and, under the old regime, persisted in for many years, till at length, in its maximum state both as to extent and inveteracy, it was bequeathed into their hands; and they

must lay their account with a reckoning of tenfold severity, if, satisfied with a few slight touches of reformation, they merely dress up an enormity which ought to be altogether destroyed. But there still remains for them one apology, under which I do feel a relenting sense of any severities that myself may have uttered, and which I shall certainly feel it my duty to retract and to expunge on the moment that the tokens of a substantial, a thorough, an out and out reformation are at all discernible. And the apology is this: These men do not know how great the evil is which they are still perpetuating. It is no more than even-handed justice to extend in their favour the benefit of the same consideration on which alone we can vindicate the resistance made both by Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr Thomson to a chapel of ease in the Cowgate. They did no better, because they knew no better; and were but our Saviour's dying prayer* at all times present to our thoughts, what a restraint to the asperities of debate—even our argumentative vehemence would give place to "the meekness of wisdom." The recollection of that utterance from Him when pouring out His soul for us, what an unction of blessed charity should it lay upon the heart,—what an emollient should it prove in all our controversies!

But we are again forced by the pressure of other engagements to abridge our remaining observations; and can only present a very brief summary of the leading points involved in the question of new terri-

* "Father forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*"

torial churches, of which we select the one that was proposed for the Cowgate merely as an illustrative specimen of all the others. The few statements we have now to offer, succinct as they are, we submit for the consideration not only of our city rulers, but of all who take an interest in the moral well-being of the community at large.

1. The proposal was to build a church on strictly territorial principles for behalf of a contiguous population in the Cowgate, amounting to 2500. The objection to such a church is, that it would be a pauper church, and that as such it would have revolted the upper and middle classes of society from attendance upon it. In other words, a whole section of contiguous families, making up a population of between two and three thousand, is to be consigned to abandonment on the footing of its being a pauper section; and that without any commensurate provision for the Christian instruction of its inhabitants. For where we ask is this provision to be found? Not in their parish church. The district is wholly in the Old Greyfriars, whose population is 4345, and in whose church there are only 153 sittings at or beneath five shillings, or at and beneath four shillings, taking into account the abatement in favour of parishioners. A hundred and fifty-three such sittings for a population of 4345, will just afford eighty-eight sittings for a population of 2500. And are eighty-eight sittings enough for 2500 people? sittings of such a description too as that not one in a hundred would be induced to pay any thing for them. No; but it may be said that there are a good many of these 2500 who can afford

to pay higher than four shillings for their sittings, and such higher-priced sittings are to be had in their own parish church, with a preference too in their favour. But it is forgotten that a new church was denied to these people—a denial vindicated on the express ground that the church would have been a receptacle of paupers; and all that we contend for is, that if so, and that as this receptacle has been withheld from them, there is no other receptacle, in the Establishment at least, that can possibly take more than about a fifteenth part of them in.* In other words, upwards of a thousand human beings in a state for church-going, and that too in a very small slip of the city territory, are left to shift for themselves; or, corresponding to this number, considerably more than 2000 immortal creatures are consigned to abandonment by our magistrates—and that too in the character of a pennyless and pauper tribe, whose Christian instruction is not worth the caring for. Still we shall not call it heartlessness, but heedlessness. It is done ignorantly and in unbelief, therefore we only pronounce it to be reckless. If done knowingly, and with their eyes open to the whole truth of the case, we should call it remorseless; and should, in the conclave of that council-chamber, the ignorance of this woful destitution ever be removed, but there still remain behind the iron insensibility that with coldness and contempt would spurn it away, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united."

* 88 × 15=1320, very little more than one half of the 2500.

2. But it is said that there is no destitution, on the contrary, enough of room in and out of the Establishment, and that room cheap enough for all who will. There might not be a sufficiency of provision in the churches, but quite a sufficiency in the churches and meeting-houses together—enough in short to meet the demand, enough of accommodation for all who desire to avail themselves thereof. Now this is the very hinge of the controversy. Whether, in the work of Christianizing, are we to regulate our measures by the necessities of the people, or by the demand and desires of the people? When it is said that the provision for the religious instruction of the inhabitants of a town is as great as is *required*, the question altogether turns on the meaning of the term; and we ask, whether are we to understand of this existing provision that it is as great as the *wants* of the inhabitants require, or as great only as the *wishes* of the inhabitants require? In other words, whether is it our part to do as much for the Christianity of the people as the people need, or only to do as much as the people themselves are suing for at our hands? If the taste of the people for goodness have languished into extinction, does that absolve us from all further responsibility; and shall we therefore do nothing for the revival of it, nor make one effort more to seek and to save them? Is their zeal for their own best interests the barometer by which our zeal in their behalf is also to be regulated, so that we shall cease caring for them, the moment that they have ceased caring for themselves? If I understand Christianity in

its spirit or its actuating principle, it is altogether of a missionary and aggressive character. This character it bore at its commencement, when it came down a message from heaven to earth,—a message to the dead, and the lost, and the sunk in deep insensibility. This character it sustained throughout the first ages of its progress in the world, when, instead of the nations seeking after the apostles, the apostles and first teachers of the gospel went forth among the nations. And this character, if I mistake not, must be kept up till the latest ages, at least of our present dispensation, else Christianity will take its departure from the world. That the two parties, the teachers and taught, should be brought together, there must be a movement; and it is made by those who have the will going in quest of those who have not the will,—instead of waiting, according to the process of our modern Voluntaryism, till they who have not the will shall go in quest of those who have it. There must be an active warfare with the sluggishness, and the torpor, and the deep indifferency of the human spirit—a forthgoing by them who are Christians, on them who are not Christians. Now, how does this suit with the new principle of demand and supply? The two are at perfect antipodes. On the first principle, should there anywhere be five hundred contiguous families, with some rare exceptions, in a state of profound irreligion—the philanthropist who is conversant both with the nature of Christianity and the nature of man, would recommend a *territorial* church there, having a minister attached to it, charged with the work of

busy visitation among the streets, and the lanes, and the by-ways, that he might compel them to come in. But on the second principle, there are philanthropists of another description, who hold it enough if they can point to a *general* church, with its unlet and half-empty sittings, in the midst of a population lapsed by thousands, and lapsing in greater numbers every year, into a state of moral and spiritual apathy. And so, for example, we are told of the places of worship which stud the very margin of the Cowgate; more especially of one of these places, an Independent Meeting-House in North College Street, with one-third of its sittings free, and many of these unoccupied; we are told of this as an acquittal in full of all further obligation to the people of its vicinity—and that, at least, the building of a new church for them was wholly uncalled for. And so it would, could we only have obtained this old church, and converted it into a territorial one for the benefit of its contiguous families. And accordingly, this very church we attempted to get the possession of on the death of the late pious and venerable Mr Aikman,*—before making the proposal to build a

* We ascertained from his brother that we could not succeed in obtaining the purchase of it. By the way, Bailie Maclaren has given himself unnecessary trouble on the subject of an attempt made by us to obtain Lady Yester's as a territorial church, an attempt from which we desisted, so soon as we learned on satisfactory information, that, both from the previous measures of the kirk-session and congregation, and from the present circumstances of the Town-Council in relation to the city creditors, the execution of such an idea was impracticable. It did not come the length of a formal proposition to that honourable body, any more than the other proposal came the length of a formal proposition to any body of trustees, if such there are, connected with the

new one for the householders in the Cowgate. So there it stands unrelated by any local tie, save that of juxtaposition to its immediate neighbourhood, and of this we are told in argument for no new church being necessary there. Surely, if this or any other chapel have done enough for its neighbourhood, this can best be ascertained from the state of the neighbourhood. And we can tell of two distinct household surveys, both of them made several months ago, of localities whose remotest points are within a few hundred yards of this said meeting-house—the one consisting of all the tenements on the south side of the Cowgate, between the Horse Wynd and College Wynd, with the west side of the College Wynd; and the other being the Horse Wynd itself. In the first there is a population of two hundred and sixty-two, with only nine seat-holders among them *in all places of worship*, or one in twenty-nine: and there is not an individual of these nine seat-holders who has rented a sitting in the Independent chapel. But its free sittings may perhaps have proved a great accommodation to the families of this quarter. Why, it is a quarter containing seventy-four families,* and of these, but one family call themselves Independents—the rest in general stating, that they

North College Street Independent Meeting-house. The Old Greyfriars church would not, in the circumstances, have done for a territorial experiment. The parish is too large; the church is a collegiate one; nor was I then acquainted with a single member of the kirk-session, whose zealous approval and co-operation in the enterprise would have been so indispensable to its success.

* Of these, however, the ecclesiastical state of one family was not ascertained.

are of other denominations; and there is only one member of that family who professes to go occasionally to that Independent meeting-house in North College Street. The Horse Wynd again is the better district of the two. Of the fifty-nine families surveyed in it, the rest being from home or out of the way, there are fifty-three seat-holders in a population of two hundred and sixty-one, or less than one in five. But it strikingly marks a distinction sadly overlooked by our confident reasoners on the state of society, and more especially on the habits and condition of the working classes,—the distinction between the *lower* orders and the *lowest* order,—that, if we abstract but a very few of the better families intermingled with the rest, we shall soon arrive again at whole masses of fearful moral destitution. Even from this more respectable locality the Horse Wynd, at the head of which the Independent meeting-house stands, we have only to abstract eleven families, who have so many as twenty-seven sittings among so few as thirty-six individuals—when there remain twenty-six sittings among a population of two hundred and twenty-five, being little more than one for every nine of the population. In this second district of fifty-nine families, there are, upon the whole, three families of Independents, among whom, at the time that our survey was taken, there were six seat-holders in the North College Street chapel, besides one or two more who meditated to become seat-holders. This is very well so far as it goes; but is this a state of matters in which either a Christian public or a Christian magistracy ought to rest

satisfied? Here are two localities with a population of five hundred and twenty-three, from which number, if you subtract double the number of all its seat-holders, there remain four hundred in a state of entire ecclesiastical destitution; or, extending the survey to the whole of the proposed Cowgate parish, a population of two thousand five hundred having not more than two hundred and fifty sittings amongst them in *all places of worship*, and with about two thousand therefore in the same state of total unprovidedness. Is nothing to be done with these? and are we to be told of an effete meeting-house which attracts and harbours none of them, with its unlet and unoccupied sittings so preposterously gloried in, though the very badges of its impotency—are we to be told that its useless juxtaposition is to be accepted of in full of all demands for the moral and Christian well-being of so many families? Is it for a moment to be endured that there shall be a reduction in the number of our clergymen—when to reclaim and gather in such a population would require the undivided services of one of them, and there are at least ten such other populations within the limits of the Royalty? Are we, at the joint recommendation of city members and city councillors to trench on the fund set apart by the men of other and better days for the Christian education of the people; and, by an act of most magnificent delinquency, make offering of the highest interests of the commonalty as a sacrilegious bribe to the constituency of Edinburgh? We speak for the unfranchised in opposition to the unjust and arrogant claims of

the represented population; nor can we consent to the families of the Cowgate being sacrificed in order that the landlords of the city, its great household proprietors, might more magnificently attire or more deliciously regale themselves.* We had rather an ostensible and avowed despotism, than a system like this, gilded with the name of liberty—with the perpetual annoyance of its little measures, the craft and the tyranny of its little men.

3d. My third and last remark upon this subject is called forth by a very general misconception that obtains in regard to the real state, to what may be termed the internal structure of every plebeian community. Each such community is apt to be viewed by the superficial observer as if spread out on the same level of degradation—forming throughout an unalleviated mass of crime, or ignorance, or pauperism. Now, instead of this, there is a gradation everywhere. There are magnates in the Cowgate. And we will venture to say that nowhere is an aggregate of a thousand human beings to be found, without a scale of rank and precedency being, on a narrow inspection, discernible amongst them. To the moralist and the Christian they present the materials for a most

* The commutation of the annuity levied for the support of our city ministers from occupiers to owners were the greatest improvement that can be made upon it. But whether this shall be effected or not, it were certainly most desirable that all payments from tenants of houses under £10 of rent should be abolished. They do not make up more than a twentieth part of the whole produce; and on this part being given up, along with the establishment of low seat-rents, then the annuity tax would stand forth in the entire and unambiguous character of being paid, not *by* the lower orders, but of being paid *for* them.

interesting process, whether of spiritual or intellectual cultivation; nor can I imagine a more delightful task to one imbued with a taste for those higher philanthropies which blend together the moral and economic well-being of society, than the prosperous management of human nature in localities like these. What revolts one is to observe the unfeeling way in which whole sections and breadths of peopled territory are consigned to the outfields of irreclaimable crime or irreclaimable pauperism. The objection to the Cowgate church that it "would have been stigmatized as the pauper church, being built expressly for the poor; the wealthy and even the middle classes would reluctantly have connected themselves with it,"*—

* "The Church its own Enemy," by Mr Adam Black, p. 42. We have met in other controversies with this disposition to regard a plebeian population in a generalized aspect—viewing them only *en masse*, without adverting to the obvious distinction which obtains between one class of them and another. Hence a tendency, on more subjects than one, to reason as if the foundation on which society rested was throughout of homogeneous materials, instead of reasoning as if that foundation was made up of successive strata; and that the great anxiety should be, lest the lowest stratum of all shall become every year more putrid and unsound, and so endanger the stability of the whole fabric. A superficial observer takes so distant a view of the object, that he comes not within sight of details and distinctions, though this be of vital importance to all our reasoning on the present state and future prospects of society. Like an unobservant by-passer through some plebeian district of a city, who never once dreams of the mighty gradation from the highest to the lowest of its householders, he lumps or amalgamates them all under the one denomination of the common people. He has not entered at all into the depths or statistics of the subject—he has but looked on the upper surface of it—or, if reasoning on a sort of general average between the best and the worst-conditioned of the industrious classes, he reflects not that beneath that average there is a gathering mischief, the inevitable tendency of which is to

is akin in species to, though far less atrocious in character than, the following objection to plebeian churches by the authors of the Statement of the Scottish Central Board of Dissenters: "In all our large towns there unhappily exists a very large population composed of the avowedly irreligious, and of all those classes who fill our jails and bridewells and infest our streets, for whom to provide church accommodation as the means of reclaiming them from their evil courses, would betray a lamentable degree of ignorance of human nature."*

We now conclude with the more pleasant task of offering a few brief suggestions to the real friends of the common people of Edinburgh.

(1.) Be assured that a great, a monstrous evil exists in the present system of seat-letting. Beware of those deceptive representations which would persuade you to the contrary; and let not the unanimous complaint of the kirk-sessions, along with the depositions of parochial house-

undermine the stablest community on earth, and to bring down the prosperity of all its orders.

This imagination that every plebeian district of a town is a dead level of equal, unmixed, unalleviated want and wretchedness, we attempted to expose a few years ago, when discussing an economical subject, in a pamphlet entituled—"The Supreme Importance of a Right Moral to a Right Economical State of the Community." And it is substantially the same error, though in a different form and with a different application, that we now meet with, in our attempt to advocate such a system for the Christian instruction of the people, as might bring down that instruction to the very lowest of the commonwealth.

* "Statement relative to Church Accommodation in Scotland, by the Scottish Central Board for Vindicating the Rights of Dissenters," p. 8. For the difference in point of effect between *general* and *territorial* church accommodation, see our tract on "Church Extension, viewed as a question between Churchmen and Dissenters."

holders on this subject, be stifled or overborne by the special pleadings of those who undertake to defend the practice of the Town-Council. Persevere in your attempts to have the whole matter thoroughly and substantially rectified. If you could obtain such a great and general reduction as that two-thirds of the sittings might be had at 3s. each—the remaining third of the church-room might be allowed to fetch its market-price from among the higher and wealthier classes of society, but with a rigid preference in every instance to the inhabitants of the parish.*

(2.) Should the process of uncollegiating take effect, there is ample room among the population within the royalty for new parishes to the five uncollegiated ministers. But five new parishes

* It were well if the parochial seat-letting were under the control of the kirk-session, with an office in each parish for the transaction of the business, and the benefit both of a full intimation, and of sufficient time for the parishioners to avail themselves of their preference ere the general seat-letting should commence, and which might take place as at present in a central or common office for the whole town.

The objection brought against the parochial system in towns, from the fluctuations that take place by the constant shifting of families, is one with which I have been familiar for twenty years, and for which I have no other answer to give than at the first. This fluctuation is immensely overrated. It is produced, not by the successive liftings of different families every year, in which case one might very soon part with the whole of his parishioners; but it is produced by the alternate movements of a people who are ever on the wing, oscillating backwards and forwards over the heads of a stable population. The truth is, that the population of a city is more stationary than that of a country parish, exposed at every term to the flitting of farm-servants. At the same time it were well to obtain precise statistics on this subject, which might easily be had, by inquiring in future surveys at every family, how long the term of their residence within the parish had been, and entering this into a separate column.

imply five new churches; and in the present difficulties of the town, it were well if the Christian philanthropists of Edinburgh could be led to adventure themselves on the erection of these.

(3.) But there is a still larger and far more destitute field for enterprises of this sort among the suburb population of Edinburgh, subject however to the heavy disadvantage of there being no endowment to lighten the seat-rents. To repair this, we are now attempting to obtain a small allowance from government for the maintenance of the clergyman; and that, not to enrich him, but to lower the terms on which the common people might find admittance into the churches that we had previously provided. There is therefore a distinction between new churches within, and new churches without the royalty. At least five new churches may be raised in the former situation by money lent; but all new churches in the latter situation, to be available for the purpose of territorial places of worship for the families of the general population, can only be raised by money given.

(4.) But wherever a new parochial economy is meant to be set up, it is in all cases most desirable that a moral preparation should go before the erection of the material apparatus. I do not know a more useful set of labourers than our local missionaries, who ply the families through the week, and congregate them at preaching stations, either on week-nights or on the Sabbath. If the divine blessing be duly sought and depended on, I should say of these home missionary operations, that they

are far the most hopeful and likely operations now on foot for the regeneration of our city families. There are upwards of two thousand hearers who have thus been gathered into so many little conventicles, under the patronage of the ministers of the establishment in Edinburgh and its environs—the nurseries, we fondly trust, of future congregations and future churches. They who are engaged in this work of high promise, should be enabled to give all their time to it; and this we can only expect, when instead of gratuitous they are paid labourers. Let me therefore invite the liberalities of the Christian public for the multiplication and support of these men, who by their devoted and successful agency might earn for themselves a title to become the future clergymen of the congregations that shall be formed.*

* Yet however desirable this might be as a preparatory, it should never once be acquiesced in as a sufficient and ultimate arrangement for the Christian instruction of the people. In this latter view I perfectly agree with my intelligent friend the Rev. Mr Lewis of Leith, when desiderating instead of a mission station a parish church, and instead of a missionary a minister with a staff of elders and a school-house and schoolmaster to the bargain.—"The missionary," he observes, "wants the *authority* to compel the people to come in, and his preaching station wants the *attraction* to draw them in." And therefore, "the number attending a missionary station is not a *certain* test of its utility and efficiency. Above all, the smallness of the number is no evidence whatever that a church in that station is uncalled for, and no reason why its erection should be delayed. A well filled missionary station is doubtless a good practical argument for a church, but an ill filled one, provided there be a contiguous destitute population, is no argument against one. We must have the parish church and minister, the system that is consecrated in the association even of the sabbath-breakers and profligate amongst the poor, ere we shall effectually recall them to Christian habits."—There can be no doubt of a great likely

There is much in the pamphlet of Mr Adam Black which I leave unnoticed—as his reasoning against an establishment from its inefficiency, when badly administered, which is reasoning against the fitness of a machine from its feeble execution when put into the hands of an incompetent workman: and his vindication of the high seat-rents to indemnify the annuity-payers, which would justify the heritors of country parishes to indemnify themselves in the same way for their teinds, so as to exclude from public worship the great bulk of our rural population, even as the magistrates of Edinburgh have excluded from our churches the great bulk of the city population: and his speaking of the tax as an oppressive imposition on Catholic or indeed any other proprietors, without the perception, or at least without the acknowledgment, that every buyer of a city property deducted the burden from its price, and that every inheritor of the same derived the burden along with the property from those who went before him: and his total oversight of the question as to the real incidence and effect of this so-called tax: and lastly, his charging the degeneracy of our towns on the establishment, without the slightest notice of the possibility that this may have arisen from the establishment being greatly too limited for the work it had to do, or the impossibility of clergymen with all their strenuousness and zeal preventing that degeneracy, when saddled either with too large parishes, or with general congregations. Like other merely prac-

enlargement of influence and usefulness, on the preaching station becoming a parish church.

tical men, he lays all generalized experience, however soundly it may have been generalized into a just proposition or just theory, if it be not in unison with the details of his own daily and routine walk of observation—he lays all such experience to the account of imagination or hypothesis. But without further remark, either on these inconclusive reasonings, or on the lame and impotent conclusions to which they have led—let me gladly acknowledge those gleams of kindliness and Christian feeling wherewith the work is occasionally lighted up, and which serve both to relieve the hardness of controversy and to disarm the severity of criticism.

No. VI.

# SPEECH

ON

# THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

# THE CHURCH DEPUTATION

IN LONDON,

DURING THEIR LATE VISIT THERE.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AT ITS MEETING ON 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1835.

# SPEECH

ON THE

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE CHURCH DEPUTATION

IN LONDON.

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Before entering upon any narrative of our proceedings in London, let me advert to a very general habit of those who make any statement about them, or who speak of the matter at all,—as if what was done there on the part of the Church, was done by the Church's Deputation. Now, we composed only a fraction of that body. We were not the Deputation, but went as the precursors of the Deputation; and the reason why we did not call upon the rest to follow is, that we never till towards the conclusion of our stay could see our way for so much as three or four days before us. The question, without any privity or consent of ours, was brought before the House of Commons previous to our arrival; and then the postponements, often for only one or two nights at a time, left us uncertain whether the business would not be decided ere we could be joined by any of our colleagues from Scotland, or whether they would not like ourselves have to wait interminably till the

fit opportunity should come round for acting with any propriety or effect. The only occasion on which we were altogether free from this perplexity was, when made to know, some ten days before, of the time when his Majesty would receive the Address of the General Assembly. Of this we were enabled to send down the timeous information to Edinburgh; but none of the gentlemen seemed to think, that of itself it constituted a sufficient errand for a journey of four hundred miles. I state these things for the purpose of satisfying the church, that we are not chargeable in this matter with the neglect of others; and, most assuredly, not with any wish to have the whole management or monopoly of the business to ourselves.

This being premised; and, furthermore, craving your indulgence, though by the figure of speech which gives to a part the name of the whole, we should fall into the customary style of expression on this subject, and, with the rest of the world, call ourselves the Deputation—the first observation I have to make is, that we, the Deputation from the General Assembly, entered into no compromise with Government; and if the measure actually obtained was less beneficial to the interests of the people of Scotland than many others that could be imagined or specified, this was not the fruit of any consent or approbation on our part. Strictly speaking, the relation in which the parties stood to each other, and where the power was all upon one side, did not admit of compromise. The Deputation had but one object, which was to achieve all they could for extending the means of

religious instruction in the country; and for this purpose, to make the best possible arrangement to which the Government would give its consent. If we acquiesced in a less favourable measure, it was not because we preferred the less to the greater good; but because, however much we preferred a more favourable measure, and however earnest in our expression of this preference, we had not the power of carrying it.

And, accordingly, nothing could be more distinct or definite than our first proposition to the Government—an immediate grant towards the endowment of all those Chapels of Ease and new places of worship which already existed. Such a measure would have been perfectly analogous to the procedure of Government in other instances,—as in the dispensation of Educational Grants, when, on one part of the expense being defrayed by private liberality, the remaining part is advanced by the state; and in the case often of Colonial and Foreign Churches, when, on a certain proportion of the cost being undertaken by individual contributors, all that remains for the completion, both of the erection and of the endowment, is made up by an allowance from the public revenue. The mere fact of so much money being advanced by private individuals for the establishment of a school or of a church is, in these instances, regarded by the Government as a sufficient evidence for the necessity of such a provision; and on this evidence they proceed without further inquiry. We certainly conceived, that we had a most abundant evidence of this sort to offer in the very existence of sixty-

six chapels, raised from time to time by private means, under a sense of their necessity; and, over and above this, in the munificent sum of sixty-five thousand pounds for new places of worship, which nothing could have drawn out but a most urgent conviction of the moral and spiritual wants of the respective localities in whose behalf this money had been raised. We flattered ourselves, that on the exhibition of a proof and a testimony so substantial as this, we might have obtained, and without further inquiry, a grant for at least the partial endowment of all our New Churches; and this is the only proposition for which, absolutely, and in all its entireness, the Deputation of the General Assembly hold themselves responsible.

It is true, that along with an immediate grant for the endowment of all actual Chapels and new erections, they were not only prepared to acquiesce in a Commission for the ascertainment of all future cases, but they would have rejoiced in the adoption of it. So far was a grant for the immediate object from conflicting with this more general and ulterior object, that the one measure formed the best possible argument in favour of the other. One ground, among many others, on which we pressed an immediate grant was, that if government would only set our Chapels and New Churches agoing on the endowed and territorial system, they would present so many experimental specimens to any commission of inquiry which they might choose to institute; and so confident were we of the result, that for myself I could have perilled the question of a further and future extension of our Church,

on the good done or doing, in virtue of the first step which had been entered upon—insomuch that Government should not have been committed to any additional endowments, if it could not be made palpable, that in the effect of the endowment already given, an ample return of money's worth had been made for all the money that had been heretofore expended.

But the truth is, that ere the arrival of the Deputation in London, all their hopes of an immediate grant were foreclosed. A previous inquiry in one shape or other had been already resolved upon. Sir William Rae had moved for it in one form, and this was met by a proposal for it in another form on the part of the government. We were not the arbitrators of this question—we were but the observers of movements in an upper firmament, over which we had no more control than we had over the portents and shifting appearances of the sky. The husbandman does not direct the fluctuations of the weather, but he regulates his proceedings by them; and neither could the Deputation from the Church of Scotland direct, they could not even prognosticate, the incessant changes that from day to day were taking place in the feelings and purposes of the men in power. Their single business was to make the most for their cause; and they did succeed in effecting some wholesome alterations on the Government measure, previous to its being submitted to the House of Commons. In one word, we did not move from our posts till we had prevailed to all the extent which lay within the limits of our opportunities and powers. It was

at the expense of much fatigue and great anxiety that, amidst the heat and hurry and hard driving of the metropolis, we gained some favourable points: and then, as if to repair the exhaustion, as if to strengthen us for our journey homewards—the farewell season of our departure, our last days in London, were watered and refreshed by a most exuberant shower of promises.

The points we gained were, that the inquiry should not be confined to the single element of church-room; but that it should be extended to the means of pastoral superintendence also, and more especially to the state of the people in regard to their actual attendance on the ordinances of religion—which last question, if prosecuted aright in poor and crowded localities, is peculiarly fitted to evince both the reality and extent of a great ecclesiastical destitution, and the utter impossibility of relieving it but on the principle of a territorial and endowed establishment. We further succeeded in obtaining a provision for interim reports, without which, all Government aid might have been postponed to an indefinite period, instead of its being competent as now to determine on the relief that shall be given in special instances, so soon as the necessity in these instances shall have been previously ascertained.

On the other hand, there are points of an obnoxious, or, at least, of a questionable tendency and character, both in the motion and the Commission founded on it, for which the Deputation are not in the least responsible. They never gave their consent to the proposed inquiry into the ec-

clesiastical funds, and they never were consulted as to the appointments of the Commission, or as to the terms of it; and this, notwithstanding their known anxiety on the subject of both. They gave in a paper of proposed instructions for the Commissioners; but of this no notice was taken, nor is it known if any use was made of it, in the framing of the Commission. Every question from the Deputation on these topics, was met by the general assurance, that all would be done in a way most satisfactory to the friends of the Church of Scotland; and as a proof how satisfactory, and in what a spirit of honest kindness to the Church the whole matter was proceeding, we were told of Mr Hope Johnston being one of the Commissioners. If there be a discrepancy between the sample and the stock, this, most assuredly, is not chargeable upon the Deputation, who, after the general measure of a Commission had been resolved upon, were no longer admitted to the counsels, nor honoured with the confidence of the government.

It is painful to speak of the policy which, in some quarter or other, must have been practised against us; but let me give the unvarnished tale, and leave it to its own impression on the understandings of the Assembly. After a Commission had been resolved upon, Mr Simpson and I remained a fortnight in London; and that for the purpose of looking after the appointment of its members, and lending our professional aid, if it would be accepted, in framing the instructions which should be delivered to them. For our continuance in London, with this special purpose, I

received the strongest encouragement from one of the Cabinet ministers to whom I revealed the intention I had formed, and who expressed himself both gratified and grateful in the prospect of our assistance—when settling the details and executive provisions of the measure. We also had received the promise of Lord Melbourne, and Lord J. Russell, that the Commission should be a fair and impartial one; and against neither of these noblemen, nor, indeed, against any known and certain individuals whatever, do I offer any imputation. I know not on whom the burden of any delinquency should light; but certain it is that, when from the hands of the principals in his Majesty's government who made the promise, we fell into the hands of its subordinates, whose province, I presume, it was to implement the execution of it; then it was that obstructions were thrown in our way, and the veil of a dark impervious secrecy was spread out between us and all that was doing in this matter by the agents concerned in it. There was one gentleman, a member of the House of Commons, in high favour with the government, and who himself had a high favour for the Church of Scotland, who introduced us to Lord Melbourne, and was present at the interview of a whole hour, which took place betwixt us. He was understood on both sides to be the medium of communication—the person in whom we confided, and to whom they communicated upon the subject. To him we ventured to suggest the names of several Edinburgh gentlemen, the friends of the Church on the one hand; taking care, at the same time, agreeably

to the soundest advice of the Church's best and firmest supporters, that they should be the friends, on the other, of the existing administration. And besides these, we farther recommended the appointment of Mr Colquhoun of Killermont, as connected with the great manufacturing region in the west of Scotland; Mr Campbell of Islay, because of his paternal interest in the West Highlands; and Mr Loch, from whom we might have obtained the greatest assistance in investigating the wants, and devising the requisite supplies for the North Highlands, more especially in the counties of Sutherland and Caithness. We were not told that these would be appointed, but we were told that the appointments would be alike satisfactory with these. We received the strongest general assurances that it would be a fair and a friendly Commission; and were given to know, as the reason why they refrained from any more special communication, that they deemed it for the good of the Church of Scotland to have it in their power to say, that "we, its representatives in London, had no share or influence in the nomination." But, along with this, we were told again and again that the Church of Scotland would be satisfied; and, by way of specimen, as I have already said, they revealed to us one of the names, Mr Hope Johnstone, on whom we were asked to call for the purpose of announcing his appointment, and obtaining his consent to it. No one, it is certain, could be more satisfactory than he; and feeling, as we did, that we were in the hands of honourable men, it was impossible to leave London but with

a strong general confidence, which themselves had awakened, that all would be right. After this, how could we haunt the offices of government with our inquiries and our suspicions any longer, more especially when assured we had nothing to fear, and that the great objects of our mission were most fully and satisfactorily accomplished? On this footing, and with this understanding, we left London; and I will not say what I felt, when a few days afterwards, the Gazette, with its catalogue of names before unknown and unheard of, made its appearance—with its majority of Scotch working commissioners, who had already made demonstrations which bespoke hostility to our cause; and a power vested in any three of their number to offend, at least, if not to invade, the dearest principles of the Church, and, whether of its state or character, to send up their own unchecked representations.

There is one thing which some will think the Deputation might have done, and which they have failed to do. They might have acted more on the suspicion that all was not as it ought to be. They might have distrusted the general assurances of friendship, that with so much of strenuousness, and so much of apparent sincerity, had been given to them. However honourable those heads of the government might be with whom they had personally negotiated, and from whom they had obtained so many satisfactory professions, they might have recollected the possibility that a measure, however ostensibly and avowedly in favour of the Church, might be made over, for the settlement of its details and executive provisions, to some of those lurking and low-

minded underlings of office, hard and hacknied practitioners, uncumbered by the delicacies of truth and honour—and so all the better qualified for the task of dexterously traversing the promises which government had uttered, and putting a mockery on all the confidence which these promises had awakened. We might, it may be said, at least have imagined such a likelihood as this; and, for making head against it, have called to aid a more refined and skilful diplomacy in the management confided to us, than we seem to have brought into operation.

The instant and decisive reply to this is, that these are not the proper weapons of the Church's warfare. Whatever the cunning and concealment of her adversaries may be, it is not for the Church to enter on the arena of a contest so ignoble; nor, for the purpose of tracking and counter-working their miserable devices, to take up such instruments as they are willing to employ, or ply along with them the devices of "a left-handed wisdom." The least appearance or approach to that manœuvre or trickery, or low jockey-ship, which might be helpful to the establishment of a worthless cause, does not comport with the greatness or the simplicity of our objects. An open, direct, and magnanimous policy is far better suited to us: and if from the hands of honourable men, any business of ours shall have been transferred into the hands of heartless petti-foggers, who care not for the starving multitudes of our city lanes, and enormous upland parishes—this may bring a temporary arrest on the benevolence that would relieve them; but the Church retires with uninjured moral strength from the con-

flict, and will find ample compensation for her wrongs, by a fresh appeal to an indignant public, in behalf both of her own righteous cause, and of a deeply injured population.

This is our reply to all those who, either to evince their own shrewdness, or to indulge in coarse and contemptuous ridicule, tell us that we, simple and unpractised men as we are, have been hoaxed by the expert and wily politicians of London. Now that the age of moral chivalry is gone, we can understand the boisterous glee of the Church's enemies at the success of the game which has been practised against us. We repeat, it is a game that we can take no part in; and if men are to be found who can sport and tamper with interests so sacred, to whom the gratification of their own electors is dearer far than the moral and immortal well-being of the thousands beneath them in the scale of society, who, to secure their dissenting constituencies, will make a sacrifice of the unfranchised population; and, rather than that their own wretched politics should suffer, would have irreligion and ignorance perpetuated among the families of our land; if such men there be, and theirs is a voice of greater ascendency in the councils of Government than our own,—if the highest objects of patriotism must thus make place and give way before the contests of partisanship,—it is not for the Church to mingle in this unseemly fray; but, having lifted up her testimony, and told her rulers, as became her, both of the duties of the State, and the necessities of the people, to feel acquitted of her office, and calmly wait the arrival of happier times.

And meanwhile we need not be idle, nor must we let the season of disappointment be the season of our despair. It was not thus with the ancients of our Church when spoiled of her endowments by the rapacity of the Crown, and of those nobles who formed the all-powerful aristocracy of that generation. True there was but the population of a million in these days; but whole tracts of country were rifled by the hand of violence of their ecclesiastical patrimony, and no means were left for the Christian education of the people who would have sunk into a state of moral barbarism but for the efforts of so many patriots as courageous and enlightened as the world ever saw,—the fathers and founders of the Kirk of Scotland. The territory had been desolated of its provision both for churches and schools; but they went forth upon it notwithstanding, and chalked out their parishes, and planted their stations for the ministry of the word, and without the visible means of sustenance or support, laboured both with the Church's plat, and the Church's polity, till the God in whom they trusted overthrew the counsels of their adversaries, and forced out of their sacrilegious hands a hard-won maintenance for an order of men whom now it is the fashion to stigmatize, but who have ever proved, throughout all the periods of our bygone history, and have now the opportunity of proving still, that they are the best friends of the poor man and of the labourer. For the very task again lies before us that was executed by our fathers,—not that we are yet suffering what they did from any recent or immediate plunder, though perhaps we

may read a premonitory symptom of what is coming in the threatened infliction on the Protestant Church of Ireland. In these days the population was stationary, but the Church was curtailed; and so a surplus of families had to be provided for. In our days the church has been stationary, but the population have increased; and so, though by a different process, there results a like, nay a far greater surplus of families who have to be provided for. And if our ancestors had thousands of people cast upon their hands, bereft of the means of spiritual instruction; we have tens of thousands growing up on our hands, by whom these means have never been enjoyed. If they had to find supply for the destitution of thousands who then suffered by robbery, we have to find supply for the destitution of tens of thousands who now are suffering from neglect—the neglect of centuries, in the silent progress of which, from year to year, the mischief has been growing by slow and insensible advances, so as to have escaped observation—till at length arrested by the magnitude of the accumulated result, now become palpable in those enormous suburbs of our larger towns, those numerous and new-sprung villages of our manufacturing districts, where the old parochial management of Scotland has become impossible, and all the blessings of its parochial economy are unknown.

Ours, then, is the very enterprise of two hundred years back; and ours also, it would appear, the very difficulties which exercised the faith and patience of our forefathers,—with an unprovided population on the one hand, and an unwilling Govern-

ment on the other. Our object in all its particulars is precisely what theirs was—let us follow in the footsteps of their devoted and dauntless perseverance, and like them we shall carry it. If only true to ourselves, we, sooner or later, shall compel the Government to do justice to our cause. I speak of moral compulsion alone. Nothing told more effectually in favour of our cause than the testimony given to it by the efforts and sacrifices of the people. Let us reiterate this testimony. The sum of £65,000 raised and reported last year was the first blow of the catapulta—before which even the hard and heartless politicians of this iron age, if they had but the liberty of acting as they felt and thought, if not manacled by the necessities of their truly wretched condition and as bereft of their own free agency as any slave in irons, would have infallibly given way. We shall break our way through these entanglements at last. It will require more than half a million to raise our new churches; and our distinct object, for the sake of a low seat-rent, and that our places of worship might be accessible, in whole families, to the poorest of the land, is that Government shall endow them. We ask this not as a boon to ourselves, but as a boon to that population whom Government are bound to look after. They may neglect the obligation; but let us make up as we can for their neglect, and they will at length be shamed out of it. Let us persevere in our subscriptions. Let us multiply our fabrics, and pour forth our home missionaries on the moral wastes by which they are encompassed. Let us send abroad our labourers on the plenteous and wide-

spread harvest that lies before us. This field, I rejoice to say, is already entered on. In Paisley, and Glasgow, and Aberdeen, and, in a few months more, in Dundee and Edinburgh, hundreds of wandering outcasts will have been reclaimed, and men, women, and children, whose footsteps were never before within the threshold of the sanctuary become obedient to the sound of our church-bells. It is not the miserable statistics of the Central Board that will countervail such a demonstration as this; and let us keep by it steadily, let the friends of the Church support us in it, and ultimately we shall get the better of all the arts and all the annoyances of a tremulous and shuffling policy. It is true we shall be in difficulties, so long as an endowment is withheld from us, between the care, on the one hand, of having seat-rents low enough, and, on the other, a maintenance good enough for the decent sufficiency of our new ministers. But let us do, nevertheless, as our fathers did before us—struggle onward as we may; and I prophesy that even in this our day of grossest secularity and earthliness, the spectacle of our honest endeavours, in the midst of all our defeats and all our difficulties, will at length operate irresistibly in our favour. Nothing can withstand the exhibition of genuine, untired, undissembled kindness, when its measures are judiciously conducted and steadfastly persevered in; and once the real design of our enterprise is known and its character is fully vindicated—all prejudices will at length give way; and the same God who turns the hearts of the rulers of men whithersoever He will, will make even our enemies be at peace with us.

I have to apologise for detaining you so long upon this subject. But believing as I do that the conduct of Government, or rather, I am inclined to think the conduct of certain persons intermediate and unknown, by whom the representatives of the Church and the heads of the Government have been alike deceived,—believing that this conduct has placed us on the highest possible vantage-ground for commanding, in behalf of our injured and affronted Church, the services and the sympathies of the people of Scotland, you will forgive the anxiety I feel to make the most of it; and I do hope that, whatever may be the decision of this day, it will be followed up by a vigorous rally and re-action on the part of all our friends, and that the country will take up that cause which the country's rulers seem inclined to throw an unprotected orphan upon their hands.

I would now address myself to the character of the Government Commission, and state very shortly my reasons for thinking that, notwithstanding the manifold provocations and perversities which abound in it, still it is not the wisdom only, but the duty of the Church, to carry its forbearance to the uttermost; and this, however desperate of any good being done or intended for us by the men in power. Even on the worst supposition possible, and though you had no confidence whatever in their friendship to the Church of Scotland—though you carried the distrust so far as verily to believe that they would utterly cast us off, if they thought to make a single ten-pounder by it,—though annoyed almost beyond endurance by hollow professions, by empty

and unmeaning compliments, by shifts and vacillations innumerable, by wretched balancings and compromises between the Establishment on the one hand, and the Voluntaries on the other, so as to impart a certain character of piebald or patchwork to every deed and document which might issue from them,—nay, though you stood in absolute dread, as of so many heartless calculators who could inflict their mortal blow on our venerable institute and trample it under foot, if once made to believe that, in so doing, they were offering up a hecatomb at the altar of popularity—We may, indeed, owe little to them; but what we owe to ourselves is, that no deed or no declaration proceeding from the Church as a body shall have the character of recklessness or inconsiderateness, or headlong and heedless temerity; but that any document of ours shall, in every sentence and every clause of it, be a wise and well-weighed document —without so much as one hair-breadth of excess beyond what is sound and temperate and strictly constitutional. I am the more in earnest on this subject, that as far as I can gather from conversation and from sundry articles in Newspapers, there is a certain ultraism abroad on the question of the limit between the Civil and the Ecclesiastical, to which I hold it of the utmost importance that the Church shall in no way commit herself—taking up no other position than what is perfectly tenable;—and advancing no other principle than what might stand the ordeal of future discussion, and pass unhurt through the hottest fire of controversy.

I shall very briefly touch on two or three points which I think most worthy of observation, and in a few minutes will leave the whole question to your determination.

First, then, there is in certain quarters a sensible recoil even in its most general idea from a Commission—a Commission of inquiry by the State on the affairs of the Church of Scotland. There is no ground for alarm or violent uneasiness in this. Will gentlemen recollect the Commission for government churches in the Highlands of Scotland, still in existence; and to which I fondly hope that after all our present mists and misunderstandings have cleared away, the business of Government Churches in the Lowlands will speedily be transferred. That is a Commission appointed by the State, a Commission of inquiry too, and which has proved a most beneficent organ of good to a large branch of the population of Scotland. Government, when we ask money from them, have, previously to the grant, a right to be satisfied of the alleged necessity on which the application is made; and, after the grant, have a right to be satisfied that the conditions under which the money is applicable are all of them realized. On either ground a Commission is often held to be indispensable, so that there is nothing in such an appointment, looked to nakedly and generally, which ought to alarm us.

But, again, the inquiry is going to extend not to the amount of the means for religious instruction possessed by the Establishment only, but to the amount of the means for religious instruction afforded by the Dissenters also; and this seems

to have been dictated by the erroneous, the alarming principle, that, as far as Voluntaryism provided the people with a Christian education, whatever be its tenets, or whatever the lessons of that education may be,—to that extent an Establishment is uncalled for—insomuch that if Voluntaryism, however heretical and unsound, will make itself commensurate to the supply of all the people, then an Establishment might be dispensed with altogether. This is an error which, in the eyes of many, seems to lurk in the instructions given to the Commission, and consequently to lurk in the minds of those who framed it. And a very grievous error it is; but remember it is their error, not ours. We may or we may not protest against it, but we cannot resist the inquiry which that error may have prompted; and most certain it is that it is an inquiry which we ought not to resent or be afraid of. If it be the error which suggested the inquiry, then it is the very inquiry, which, if honestly conducted, will annihilate the error. If it be a wrong principle in the legislature which has suggested this practical step to them, let us take fit occasion for rebuking the principle; but the practical step is one in which, of all others, we ought to rejoice. Grant that some baneful anti-establishment theory, unknown to their ancestors, has got possession of the minds of our rulers; and that, under the influence of this theory, they had resolved to gauge the whole length and breadth of our existing Dissenterism,—never then, I will venture to say, were the bane and its antidote brought more closely into juxtaposition with each

other; for if the illusion on the one hand have suggested the inquiry, on the other hand the inquiry will dissipate the illusion. There is nothing which I more panted after in the motion of Lord John Russell than that the Dissenters should be included in it; and nothing I was more afraid of, than that, in the conflict of parties in the House of Commons, that clause should have been expunged. Let that inquiry of all others proceed, and you will find it the very touchstone of our question—the divining instrument by which the secret will be conjured, and come up at last—wherein it is that the great weakness of Voluntaryism, and wherein it is that the great strength of an Establishment lies. Without that investigation we may have discovered that the one Established Church of a particular locality left nine-tenths of its people unprovided for; but did we stop here, we should have left the Voluntaries in possession of their argument untouched and entire. We supplement all the deficiencies; we overtake the surplus; nay, such is the elastic power and expansibility of our system, that if you would but clear away this tottering crazy edifice, this old useless superannuated Establishment, we should make beautiful work of it, and put the whole territory, after the great incubus was swept off, into a state of entire and perfect cultivation. Now, mark how this very inquiry tests the power of Voluntaryism; and enables us to judge of its boasted capacity for filling up the whole territory of a country's population—by the manner in which they have filled up those outfield portions of it

which our defective Establishment cannot possibly overtake. While some stand in dread of this investigation, lest perhaps it should make known how very much is done by the Dissenters; I welcome this investigation to the uttermost, and just that it should be known how very little is done by the Dissenters—or rather, to express it more properly, how much it is which they have left undone; and that legislators may know the length and breadth of that moral wilderness which without the energies and resources of an endowed Church, and on the principle of a territorial establishment, has never yet been entered on. For the accomplishment of this purpose, mark, I beseech you, the importance of that very question which some regard as a damning flaw in the Commission—"the numbers of those who attend places of public worship belonging to other religious denominations"—the very question on which I am willing to hinge the whole of the Church controversy in Scotland; and which, if rightly prosecuted, will prove our firmest stepping-stone to the extension we now seek, and at length to the full establishment of our cause. It is not saying enough in behalf of our Church's extension to tell us of a parish church which cannot accommodate a tenth part of its population. It is saying infinitely more both to accredit our plea, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers, that, in the plebeian districts of that parish, contiguous thousands are to be found where not one in eight of the population go to all places of worship put together,—and then the question, as founded on such a survey, is practically urged and brought home

to our legislators, what is to be done for the Christian education of that mighty host, whom neither a deficient Establishment, nor a feeble Voluntaryism can possibly overtake? Why, that clause of the Commission which many think looks hard and hostile on our establishment, is the best clause in it. It places us on a vantage-ground which the blind and headlong enemies of our Church are little aware of. Take away that clause, and you deprive us of our most essential evidence, of far the most effective data for a right and favourable solution of the question—secreting or smuggling away from us the best of our witnesses, and mutilating irreparably the very statistics which plead most irresistibly in our favour.

I have but one point more to touch upon, and that is the inquiry into pastoral superintendence.

I have no doubt that the question meant, however clumsily and infelicitously expressed in the Commission, is a question which respects machinery, and not the faithfulness or execution of the men who work that machinery. If we have indolent or careless pastors in our church, it is not to the legislature that we should complain of them, but we would take them into our own hands; and so our application was, not because our clergy were remiss or inefficient, but because we had too few of them—not that any one of them acquitted himself ill of his task, (it is our own province to look after that,) but that the task put into many of their hands was utterly above human strength, and could not possibly be done without a fuller apparatus; and so the proper object of our application was

that we might be enabled both to enlarge the apparatus, and add to the number of our labourers. The question respects not the working of the instrumentality, in any given district or parish; but whether, supposing it well worked, it be a sufficient instrumentality for the business which ought to be done by it. The State is not bound to make up for the individual deficiencies of any of our clergymen,—to build another church in a parish because the minister does not, when he might, fill the one he already has; or to provide an additional pastor, because the pastor already there fails in the discharge of his incumbent ministrations. We make no such unreasonable demand on the State. Our only petition is, that they would supply the defects of our machinery which, in its present state, can with no human strenuousness be made commensurate with the Christian education of the people. We, in the first instance, will not throw away our money by building a church anywhere if not required by the number and the exigencies of its surrounding population; and all we ask, in the second instance, is that a paternal government should give of their aid towards the maintenance of its future clergyman, or, in other words, (for we are always charged with looking to ourselves and to our own personal advantage,) after we have made the present of a church to so many hundreds of unprovided families, we ask government to make a present to the same families of a partial maintenance for the person who shall officiate there as their guide to heaven and instructor in the way of righteousness. The question is not as to

the manner in which our men acquit themselves of their duties of pastoral superintendence, but the question is as to the means of pastoral superintendence. This is a most legitimate inquiry for the State to make; and in the prosecution of it, no proper limitation need be transgressed by the civil power, nor any aggression made on the rightful independence of the ecclesiastical.

But far the most important of these last instructions given by Lord John Russell, is that which points to the commencement of the inquiry—to what may be called the initial footsteps of the Commission, who are directed to take up, in the first instance, the examination of those localities where any ecclesiastical destitution is alleged to exist. Now, the most substantial allegation which can be made of the ecclesiastical wants of any district is, that the people best acquainted with that district not only make affirmation of them, but, best vouchers for their belief in the reality of the statement, have actually come forward with their hundreds, and in some instances, with their thousands of pounds for the purpose of relieving them. In other words, we shall have these Commissioners engaged with the statistics of the very localities which we hold the most destitute, and to which we ourselves have been first attracted by the glaring necessity of their condition. It will be a piece-meal inquiry; and like true inductive philosophers, these men now, instead of taking their departure from theories and prejudices of their own, descending synthetically from the abstractions of their own mind to the individual

realities of the outer world, will have to ascend laboriously and by distinct stepping-stones, like the disciples of experimental science, from the truth in particulars to the truth general and the truth universal. I would not for the world that our church should interpose a single straw in the way of such an inquiry. It is the very measure to which I have laboured for twenty years to bring the authorities in our towns and the authorities of the state; that they might come and see with their own eyes the ecclesiastical wants of many thousands of our families, and be convinced on the testimony of their own senses, that nothing but a territorial establishment sufficiently filled up, and sufficiently extended, can possibly provide for them. It were the cruellest of all things, if aught either said or done by the Church could be formed into a pretext for dissolving that Commission—now that either they must do us justice, or we, strong in the truth of all our representations, shall have it in our power to expose the injustice, and put them most flagrantly in the wrong. It is beyond my imagination to conceive by what artifice, by what sophistry, the most hostile body of inquirers could make their escape from that statistical document respecting the Water of Leith which I shall offer to their notice, and on all the details of which I am ready, and have indeed asked, to come before them. And thus it might be with all the other places in Scotland where either unendowed churches are to be found, or new churches are in process of erection. They, the Commissioners, announce their readiness to examine on every alleged case of defi-

ciency—do you, the petitioners, allege the deficiency, each of the district in which he is specially interested, and be prepared to substantiate this allegation by an accurate state of the ecclesiastical condition of the families. Let them be as adverse as they may, I do long to come to close quarters with them on the statistics of the Water of Leith. And will my friend Mr Buchanan not make out his case for the village of Newhaven? Will the government Commission be able to convict Mr Begg of Libberton of his needless and chimerical enterprise in labouring, as he now does, for a new place of worship to the householders of Gilmerton? Will Glasgow not be able to substantiate, and more than substantiate, all the allegations which have called forth £25,000 from a willing public—nor to exhibit in such characters of palpable reality the condition of her operative classes, as to the means and the facilities of their Christian education, as irresistibly to tell even on the iron and hitherto untractable policy of an unwilling government? Will the new parish of St Mark's in that city, abandoned by the Dissenters because the rich had abandoned it, and now furnished with a church by the friends of the Establishment for the poor who have taken their place,—will that parish shrink back from the torch of discovery which now approaches for the purpose of demonstrating the falsehood of all our statements, and making it palpable as day, that over the whole length and breadth of our territory there is no destitution, but thanks to the power of the voluntary system, an universal fulness in Scotland? There is nothing

which I feel more ardently desirous of than to see the enlightened statists of the west in busy engagement with these Commissioners now upon the outset of their work, but who ere they address themselves to their task, must first be initiated in the very alphabet of the whole subject. But I care not how ignorant they may be, if honest, and free from prejudice. I have no reason to believe them otherwise than honest. It is their prejudices I am most afraid of; as but for them I am confident that a few practical lessons would open their eyes, and wholly dissipate that big and baneful illusion which is now arresting for a season, but never will be able to defeat or to extinguish our cause. I call on Glasgow to be ready with its districts of St Stephen's, and St Peter's, and its chalked out localities of Bridgeton and Calton,—on Paisley with its three or four new churches and its enormous Abbey parish,—on Mr M'Quhae of St Quivox to make known the state of the families of Wallaceton,—on Mr Roxburgh of Dundee to do the like with his new parish of St John's,—on Mr Gordon of Aberdeen with the newly assigned John Knox parish in that city,—on Thornton and Milton in Fifeshire,—on Buckie and the chapel district in the parish of Boyndie,—on Mr Lewis of Leith, who can make such abundant verification of his claims in the statistics of his parish there, and which he knows so well how to investigate,—on Dr Easton, who knows so thoroughly, and has done so much for the interests of his people of Kirriemuir, and—without nearly completing the enumeration—on Airdrie, and Holytown, and

Clerkston, and Rutherglen, and Strathaven in Lanarkshire. On the eve, as we are, of such investigations, and with the confidence, the triumphant confidence, that we have in the results of it, figure the depth, the exquisite severity of our mortification, if by any chance this inquiry were not to be proceeded in. Even though it were clear that government had done all they could to make it unpalatable, and every effort had been made to disappoint and to disgust us, I call on the Church to submit to any affront, to surrender its tastes and its likings and its dearest partialities, every thing in short but its principles, to brook in fact all the disagreeables which can possibly be imagined, and show what it can suffer as well as what it can do for the best interests of the people of Scotland. I know, that nothing would minister a more outrageous triumph to our enemies than if any thing done or said by us were to furnish government with a pretext for recalling that Commission. It may be made to fall through. I am prepared for any thing on the part of our relentless adversaries, who pretend, now that the inquiry has come near to us, that a fear for the result is all upon our side; the fear is all upon theirs. Inquiry, even with all the drawbacks and the disagreeables of the actual Commission, will be of ineffable value to the Church of Scotland. Let us swallow the pill, it will do us good, though it has been contrived in many ways to make it a nauseous and a bitter one. They will soon find how prodigiously every honest investigation will operate in favour of our claims; so that if ever that

commission is prematurely broken up, let it be their act, not ours. Should that event occur, we know the interpretation which would fain be given to it, as if we had first called for the lifting up of a flambeau over us, and then hated its beams. It was at the request of the church that the inquiry has been granted; let it be clearly the doing, the unprovoked doing of the state, if that inquiry is withdrawn, or in any way frustrated or brought to a fruitless termination. Let it lie at the door of others,—but tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, that the church had shrunk from the light after that the church's enemies shall have smothered it.

I now hasten to a close, but have forgot to explain the immense practical importance of that special object of inquiry which has been so much complained of, the pastoral superintendence, or rather the means of pastoral superintendence. Without this we should have a most crippled and imperfect statistics, and all the other data put together would be utterly incompetent for a right determination of the question. Take for example the schedule issued in consequence of Mr Wallace's motion of inquiry, and which is confined to the single element of church-room, with the respective proportions of the let and the unlet. No sound practical conclusion whatever can be grounded on these data alone; and without this additional item of pastoral superintendence, we shall never get the better of the sophistry and the endless mystifications of our adversaries. Take for example, the Water of Leith, with its 143 seat-holders among

1356 people, or subtracting 286, being double the number of these seat-holders from the whole population, with no less than 1070 individuals in this small locality alone, wholly unprovided for either in or out of the establishment. The informations elicited by Mr Wallace, make known to us, and within a few stone-throws of this district, a greater number of unoccupied sittings than would accommodate them all. And what is the inference that our friends the voluntaries would draw from this circumstance? Why, that nothing farther is to be done for the religious good of these neglected families. Now my inference is directly and diametrically the opposite of this. The juxtaposition of these two phenomena—the number of unlet sittings in that quarter of the town, and, at the same time, the as great number of non-church-goers at the very door of the chapels where the sittings are to be had, is with me a practical demonstration of the impotency of voluntaryism, and how utterly incapable it is either to recover or to keep a population. For if we inquire into the causes of their non-attendance, we shall find, that, irrespective altogether of the high seat-rents, there is cause enough just in the very want of this pastoral superintendence. A people never will be reclaimed to Sabbath attendance but by week-day attentions ; and for this purpose it is indispensable, not only that there shall be churches with seat-rents low enough, but territorial churches with districts small enough to be thoroughly pervaded by the clergyman, whose business it is to knock at every door, and to visit every family where the

door is opened to him. Now this is a pastoral superintendence which a dissenting minister preoccupied by his own hearers from all distances and directions cannot possibly bestow; and this also is a pastoral superintendence which the two ministers of St Cuthbert's,* the hardest working men I know any where, with their population of 70,000, can as little bestow. The conclusion is irresistible. Nothing will avail for the Christian education of these people but a territorial church in the midst of them; and a minister planted there whose distinct office it shall be, not to form a congregation any how, and at the expense perhaps of previous congregations, but to fill that church out of that district—a thing only to be done by the vigorous and incessant appliance of pastoral ministrations; by the power of Christian kindness over the hearts of a grateful and at length subdued people; by labours among the sick, by labours among the dying, by labours among the young—when, as the fruit of his unwearied perseverance in the toils and assiduities of a house-going minister, he will at length earn an abundant recompense in the spectacle of hundreds congregated by himself into one parochial family, and reclaimed to all the habits and the decencies of a church-going population.

To conclude, I hope I have said nothing that will prove offensive to any of the members of the government Commission of Inquiry. I am sure I intend it not; and desirous as I am of conferring with them largely and explicitly on the

* The Water of Leith is situated in the parish of St Cuthbert's.

objects for which they have been appointed, it is no wish of mine, but the contrary, that there shall be any thing but good will and confidence betwixt us. I will not permit myself to harbour the imagination which is afloat respecting them, trusting as I do, that it will turn out to be the fantasy of an idle dream. It is an imagination grounded perhaps on the felicitous expression of Mr Wyndham, who when speaking of one of the purposes to which parliamentary committees were sometimes made subservient, called them committees of oblivion. Many apprehend that such is the purpose of this commission; or that the way in which the government intend to honour our cause is, not by doing any thing for the promotion or the practical accomplishment thereof, but with becoming reverence for the National Establishment in Scotland, to see it gently consigned to the tomb, though at the same time, as is meet, with all the pomp and circumstance of a decent funeral. And so when they hear of its noble chairman and its honorary and its working members, the majority of which are said to be hostile to the object for which they have been ostensibly appointed—they seem to regard these last as so many active and efficient grave-diggers, with this most befitting qualification for the office, a hearty good-will to the business of it—while in the higher grades of the procession we have a chief mourner, and a goodly train of pall-bearers to grace the obsequies of our procession, and conduct it onward with all due solemnity and respect to the land of silence. But this I hope will be but the fancy of a passing moment; nor for

myself will I view the Commission in any other light than under the character of a grave and momentous reality, of whose members it is my fondest expectation, whatever I have said or think of the appointment of some of them, that everywhere in Scotland they will be received in perfect good taste, and be treated with perfect good manners. God grant that the acerbities of this most unseemly and unnatural warfare which so agitates and distempers the whole of Scottish society may be softened by the intercourse; that the controversy may at length be decided by the calm and enlightened judgment of what is practically best for the moral and Christian interests of the great mass of the people; and that all under the blessing of Heaven may issue in the secure establishment amongst us of the cause of truth, and charity, and righteousness.

# APPENDIX.

## No. I.

### CHURCH OF SCOTLAND COMMISSION.

The following is a copy of the instructions issued to the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the opportunities of religious worship, and means of religious instruction, &c., afforded to the people of Scotland:—

William R.

Our will and pleasure is, that letters patent be forthwith made and passed under the Seal appointed by the treaty of Union to be kept and made use of in place of the Great Seal of Scotland, in the words or to the effect following, viz.—William the Fourth, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c.—To our right trusty and right well-beloved Cousin and Councillor Gilbert Earl of Minto, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, and to our trusty and well-beloved Mountstuart Elphinstone, Esq., John James Hope Johnstone, Esq., Robert Bell, Esq., Procurator of the Church of Scotland, James M. Nairne, Esq. of Dunsinnan, Thomas Henry Lister, Esq., John Shaw Stewart, John James Reid, Andrew Coventry Dick, Henry Baxter, and Edward Horsman, Esqrs. Advocates, greet-

ing; whereas an humble address has been presented unto us by the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, and Commissioners of shires and burghs, in Parliament assembled, praying that We would be graciously pleased to appoint a Commission to inquire into the opportunities of religious worship and means of religious instruction, and the pastoral superintendence afforded to the people of Scotland, and how far these are of avail for the religious and moral improvement of the poor and of the working classes, and with this view to obtain information respecting their stated attendance in places of public worship, and their actual connexion with any religious denomination ;—to inquire what funds are now or may hereafter be available for the purpose of the Established Church of Scotland, and to report from time to time, in order that such remedies may be applied to any existing evils as Parliament may think fit.

Know ye, that we, reposing great trust in your fidelity, discretion, and ability, have authorized and appointed, and by these presents, do authorize and appoint you the said Gilbert Earl of Minto, Mountstuart Elphinstone, John James Hope Johnstone, Robert Bell, James M. Nairne, Thomas Henry Lister, John Shaw Stewart, John James Reid, Andrew Coventry Dick, Henry Baxter, and Edward Horsman, or any one or more of you to inquire into the opportunities of public religious worship, and means of religious instruction, and the pastoral superintendence afforded to the people of Scotland, and how far these are of avail for the religious and moral improvement of the poor, and of the working classes.

And we do, hereby, require you more particularly to inquire into the present situation of the poor and of the working classes throughout the different parishes in Scotland in that respect; and in all cases where it is alleged that there is any want of the opportunities of public religious worship, and the means of religious instruction, and pastoral superintendence, one or more of you shall visit every parish where any such deficiency is said to exist, and you shall endeavour to ascertain on the spot, by the best evidence which you can procure there, or elsewhere, the number of places of public worship belonging to the Established Church, and the means of accommodation which they afford, and how such places of worship are situate with respect to the boundaries and

the population of the parish, and if they are insufficient or inadequate, from what causes that has arisen. Likewise to report in all such cases the number of persons who attend, or are in connexion with those places of public religious worship belonging to the Established Church; and also the number of places of public worship belonging to any other religious denomination, and the number of persons attending or belonging thereto; and generally to ascertain the numbers of the poor and working classes who attend or are connected with the Established Church, or other places of public worship in connexion with it, and the numbers of those who attend places of public worship belonging to other religious denominations, and the opportunities and the extent of accommodation for religious worship which is afforded to them.

To inquire into and state generally the religious instruction and pastoral superintendence afforded by the clergy of the Established Church, and of other religious denominations, to the people, more especially to the poor and the working classes, and how far and from what causes any of the poor and working classes are deprived of the means of attending places of public worship, and receiving religious instruction and pastoral superintendence.

To inquire what funds are now or may hereafter be available for the purposes of the Established Church of Scotland, the gross amount of teinds, valued and unvalued, whether belonging to the Crown as having formerly been part of the royal revenue, or as Bishops' teinds, or from any other title, and the value thereof, and the application of the same; as also the teinds belonging to other persons, and in what manner they are held or disposed of; the endowments of the Established Church, whether arising from stipends, glebes, teinds, parsonage or vicarage, teinds of fish or other sources; the sums of money received from seat-rents, collections made at the doors of the churches, chapels, or other places of public worship belonging to the Established Church, and the manner in which the same are applied.

And for the better discovery of the truth in the premises, we do by these presents give and grant to you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority to call before you, or any one or more of you, such persons as you shall judge necessary, by whom you may be the better informed of the truth in the premises, and

to inquire of the premises, and every part thereof, by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever.

And we do hereby give and grant unto you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority when the same shall appear to be requisite, to administer an oath or oaths to any person or persons whatsoever, to be examined before you or any one or more of you, touching or concerning the premises.

And we do also give and grant unto you, or any one or more of you, full power and authority to cause all and singular the keepers of records, and other persons having in their custody any records, orders, books, papers, or other documents relating to the matters to be inquired into under this Commission, to bring and produce the same upon oath before you, or any one or more of you; and our farther will and pleasure is, that you, or any three or more of you, upon the due examination of the premises, do and shall report to us under your hands and seals respectively, what you shall find touching or concerning the premises upon such inquiry as aforesaid. And we farther will and command, and by these presents ordain, that this our Commission shall continue in full force and virtue, and that you our Commissioners or any one or more of you, shall and may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment; and we do hereby direct and appoint, that you or any three or more of you, may have liberty to report to us your several proceedings from time to time, as the same shall be respectively completed and perfected; and we do hereby authorize and empower you, in case you shall think it expedient and necessary, to appoint such number of persons, not exceeding nine, on whose judgment you can rely, to assist you in making such local inquiries as you are herein directed to make. And we do hereby command all and singular our Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Magistrates, Ministers, Messengers-at-Arms, Constables, Officers, and all other our loving subjects whatsoever, as well within liberties as without, that they be assistant to you, and each of you, in the execution of these presents; and we also hereby nominate and appoint our trusty and well-beloved George Logan, Esq., to be Clerk or Secretary to you our said Commissioners, and authorize you, or the senior member present at any of your

meetings, to administer to him the oath *de fideli administratione* in common form.

Given at our Court at St James's, the twentieth day of July 1835, in the sixth year of our reign.

By his Majesty's command,

(Signed) J. RUSSELL.

The Commission, upon this warrant passed the Great Seal of Scotland on 29th July, 1835.

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## No. II.

REMONSTRANCE of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY of the Church of Scotland against the Commission for inquiring into the Means of Religious Instruction in Scotland.

At Edinburgh, Thursday the 13th day of August 1835 years: Which day the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland having had under their consideration the constitution of the Commission lately appointed by the Crown "for inquiring into the opportunity of religious worship, and means of religious instruction, and the pastoral superintendence afforded to the people of Scotland," consider it incumbent on them to state respectfully, but firmly, to his Majesty's Government, that as at present constituted, that Commission is not such as to entitle it to the confidence of the friends of the Church of Scotland; for, while among the Commissioners named there are individuals who have publicly professed their opposition to the principle of any connexion between Church and State, the Commission, with very few exceptions, does not contain the names of individuals known to the Church of Scotland as possessing that knowledge and experience, or as taking that interest in the spiritual affairs of the people of Scotland, which are necessary to afford any security that the professed objects of the Commis-

sion can be fairly and fully carried into effect.—From the above resolution, Sir James Gibson Craig, William Bell, Esq., and John Whitefoord Mackenzie, Esq., dissented, for reasons to be given.

Extracted from the Records of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, by

(Signed) JOHN LEE,
*Cler. Eccles. Scotland.*

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## No. III.

LETTER from LORD JOHN RUSSELL to the EARL of MINTO, G. C. B. &c. &c. &c.

*Whitehall, August* 31, 1835.

MY LORD,—I am sorry to find, that in the excitement which prevails in Scotland on the subject of a Parliamentary grant to the Established Church of that country, some fears and misunderstandings have arisen with respect to the Royal Commission at the head of which your Lordship has been placed.

I need only advert shortly to the complaints which have been made, both by members of the Church and by Dissenters, of the composition of the Commission. The resolution which has been sent me on this subject from the Commission of the General Assembly, seems to take for granted that the cause of the Dissenters was to have no advocate of zeal and ability on the Commission, and that impartiality in the majority of the Commissioners is a serious fault. The Dissenters, on the other hand, seem to assume that men zealously attached to the Church of Scotland will decide without sufficiently hearing the objections to the grant, and they seek the admission of a greater number of partisans to redress the balance. But admitting, as I do, that the number of members of the Commission attached to the Church preponderates greatly over those who have any bias

towards the Seceders, I cannot think I have been wrong in endeavouring to give to the whole Commission as a body a character of calmness and impartiality.

More serious misapprehensions have taken place respecting the terms of the Commission. It has been supposed, most erroneously, that the Commissioners were to inquire into the kind of pastoral superintendence given by the Clergy, instead of its amount. The words are used both with respect to the Clergy of the Established Church and of other denominations, and it is evidently not intended with regard to either the one or the other to interfere with discipline or internal arrangements.

Another misapprehension is, that the Commission may interfere with private property. Your Lordship will of course carefully guard against any supposition of this sort, and not allow it to be for a moment supposed that we mean to disturb those acts of the Scottish Parliament, which transferred the tithes from the Church to the lay proprietors of Scotland; but you will endeavour to ascertain what is the property which may yet, by existing laws, be made available for the purposes of the Church.

In the heated state of men's minds upon this subject, your Lordship will I am sure be particularly cautious in your manner of conducting local inquiries; I should advise that, keeping the terms of the Commission in view, you direct your first attention to "cases where it is alleged that there is any want of the opportunities of public religious worship, and the means of religious instruction and pastoral superintendence." In such cases I should recommend that two Commissioners, or one Commissioner and one Assistant-Commissioner, should be sent to make full inquiry into the circumstances of the district, and that you should select the persons in such a manner, that in every case one of them should be a person of unquestionable attachment to the Church. They may report either together or separately to the general body, and any three or more of you may transmit these Reports to the Home Office from time to time, to be laid before his Majesty.

I need not say, as I have already explained, that it is not desired or expected that the relative numbers of Churchmen and Seceders in all Scotland should be ascertained; but where it is alleged that new churches and new ministers are required, it will

be necessary to obtain an account of those who attend Dissenting chapels, in order that the void not filled up by any religious sect or worship, may be measured and defined.

I trust that in the course of six months from this time, the greater part of your task will be completed. I have, &c.

(Signed) J. Russell.

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## No. IV.

## DELIVERANCE OF THE COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 30th September, 1835

*On the Instructions to the Royal Commissioners.*

"The Commission having maturely deliberated upon the instructions to the Royal Commissioners for inquiring into the means of religious instruction and pastoral superintendence afforded to the people of Scotland, express their deep regret that his Majesty's ministers have not been pleased, in consequence of the judgment of the last meeting of the Commission of the General Assembly to make any change in the composition of the said Royal Commission. And whereas that Commission, from its authorizing the Commissioners to inquire generally into the opportunities of religious worship, the means of religious instruction, and the pastoral superintendence afforded to the people of Scotland, may be, and has been, interpreted as at variance with the principles and polity of the Established Church, and as calculated to weaken or to overthrow it, particularly in so far as it seems to involve in it a principle subversive of this and all other Ecclesiastical Establishments, viz. that whenever religious instruction and pastoral superintendence are found to a certain extent afforded by any sect or denomination whatsoever, there the services of the Established Church are not required, and may be dispensed with. The Commission of the General Assembly

publicly and solemnly protest against whatever has such a tendency, and declare that they consider it to be the sacred duty of the Legislature to support and protect the National Church, and to secure accommodation and religious instruction to the people of Scotland, so that they may attend regularly upon divine ordinances, and may profit by the pastoral exertions and superintendence of its ministers. With a view to these most important objects, and under the protestation herein contained, they approve of such members of the Church as may be required to do so by the Commissioners nominated by his Majesty, furnishing accurate information as to all statistical matters; and also approve of all Church Courts allowing inspection of, or giving extracts from their records, of all entries relating to the same matters; it being clearly understood, that the Commission of the Assembly hold, that it is not competent to the Commissioners to put to individual members any questions relating to the doctrine, worship, government, or discipline of the Church."

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## No. V.

## APPEAL OF THE COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND.

"That the Commission encourage the Committee on Church Extension to persevere in the prosecution of those important statistical investigations in which they have hitherto been engaged, and more especially in those districts which are being attached to the recent chapels of ease and the newly erected churches, that all grants from the Assembly's fund might be proportioned to the exigencies of the respective localities for which they shall be required. And aware, that notwithstanding all the attempts which have been made to diminish or disguise it, there is a vast extent of real and most affecting ecclesiastical destitution

in the land, which even with, and more especially without the aid of government, will require many years of most strenuous exertion and liberality ere they can be fully supplied, the Commission of the General Assembly make an earnest appeal to the Christian benevolence of the people of Scotland, and call upon them at this season, when the adversaries of the Establishment are so intent upon its overthrow, to attest by their subscriptions and their sacrifices their attachment to the Church of their forefathers, and their hearty co-operation with the effort which the Church is now making for the moral and religious well-being of the population."

No. VII.

# AN ATTEMPT

TO POINT OUT

## THE DUTY WHICH THE CHURCH OWES

TO

## THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND.

AND

MORE ESPECIALLY TO SETTLE THE QUESTION OF PRECEDENCY BETWEEN THESE TWO OBJECTS,

THE WORK THAT SHOULD BE DONE,

AND

THE PAYMENT THAT SHOULD BE MADE FOR THE DOING OF IT;

BEING

## AN ARGUMENT ON CHAPEL BONDS.

# ON CHAPEL BONDS.

1. The number of people in Scotland has increased since the period of the Reformation from one million to two millions and a half, without a corresponding increase in the number of its places of worship. The Establishment had done something to repair this deficiency—for, previous to the commencement of the scheme for its extension, which is still in embryo, it had raised sixty-six chapels,—being about one chapel for every twenty thousand of the additional population, or in the ratio of a twentieth part to the provision which existed in the days of John Knox, when there was about one church all over Scotland for every thousand of its inhabitants. Over and above this, the Dissent has contributed between three and four hundred places of worship, leaving still a fearful amount of ecclesiastical destitution; insomuch that thousands are to be found, both in our large towns and recent manufacturing villages, in a state of utter alienation from the calls and opportunities of the gospel—it being generally, if not universally, the result of our statistical inquiries, that whenever a district in any of our more populous cities or new-sprung villages is occupied chiefly by the working classes, not one in five, or in eight, or in ten, or even in sixteen,

and twenty, are the regular attendants of any Christian congregation.

2. One of the first duties surely of the Established Church is, if possible, to reclaim these—to make invasion on such fearful masses of irreligion and profligacy, now that she has made discovery of their existence—to arm herself with the powers and equipments of a great home mission, for the purpose of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to bear on the tens of thousands who are strangers to the word and the ordinances of religion—to knock at the door of these outlandish families, now sunk in apathy and moral degradation; and who, though to be found in hundreds and hundreds more within half a mile of us, stand at as great a moral distance from Christianity and from all its revelations, as do the artisans of China, or the wandering tribes of Tartary and New Holland.

3. But one essential part of a missionary equipment is, that the missionaries shall be paid. Nor is it generally expected that they should be paid in the first instance by those among whom they labour. It is undisputed on all sides, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel; but a great controversy hinges on the question, who the parties are that should afford this livelihood. In the vast majority of such enterprises a maintenance is not looked for, especially at the commencement, from the people for whose direct benefit the enterprise is set on foot. They are not the Hindoos who support Dr Duff and his coadjutors—nor were they the Otaheiteans who either furnished the missionary vessel, or even for a time subsisted

the messengers that carried the first tidings of the gospel to their shore—nor are they the New Zealanders who defray the expense either of sending forth or supporting the men, who now labour in the work of instructing or civilizing them—nor even, in turning from our foreign to our home undertakings, are they the householders of our neglected city lanes who award sustenance to those visitors whose office it is to pass from family to family, and ply them both on Sabbath and through the week with the offers of salvation. Without the maintenance of these living agents the work could not possibly be done; and who in general are the parties who bear the charges of this maintenance? Not, at least to begin with, the parties to whom the benefit is rendered; but the parties by whom the benefit is conferred. It comes not in the shape of a recompense from the former; but in the shape of a gift, of a donation, in short of an endowment, from the latter. The missionaries who go abroad are not supported by the free-will offerings of those to whom they preach; but by an endowment from the funds of their respective societies. The home missionaries are supported in like manner; or from sources external of the people, or of the means of the people among whom they operate. At all events, the expenses of the ministration must be paid; and, generally speaking, both in home and foreign missions, the payment is voluntary. But there is a difference of the utmost argumentative effect, and which has been marvellously little attended to, between one species of voluntary payment and another—between the

voluntary return made by those who receive the benefit, and the voluntary contribution of those who confer the benefit. The one is a voluntary recompense. The other is, to all intents and purposes, an endowment, though a voluntary endowment.

4. It is by confounding these two species of voluntaryism—the voluntaryism *ab extra*, and the voluntaryism *ab intra*, that the combatants in this sore dispute are so long of coming to a common understanding. The men who join their means to build a church, not for themselves but for others, are represented as having come over to the Voluntaries, although it is their distrust in the efficacy of the one species of voluntaryism which has prompted all their efforts and their sacrifices according to the other species—convinced as they are, that if no attempt was made *ab extra*, it never would be made *ab intra;* or the people of the district within which the place of worship is raised, would have remained without one to the end of time. When after this they apply to government for the maintenance of the clergyman, they are represented as traversing their own principle, or as renouncing the voluntary for the endowed system; when, in fact, they are but seeking to add one external contribution for the moral good of the population to another. They, in the first instance, have obtained so much at the commencement of their object, from the liberalities of so many virtuous, philanthropic and Christian men; and they now seek to obtain so much more for the completion of their object, from a virtuous, patriotic, and Christian government. What they have done

in part by the help of willing individuals, they expect to finish by the help of willing rulers. The real controversy then is not so much between compulsion and voluntaryism. It is between one species of voluntaryism and another. We should be glad if the liberality of individuals sufficed both to build and to endow; but we find it a laborious and tardy enough process, though we call in the aid of two parties, and that as individuals build government should endow. These two parties are moving in one and the same direction. They act as concurrent forces; and the same character of beneficence to others beside themselves, is impressed on their respective contributions to one and the same object. It is because internal voluntaryism never does suffice for supplying in full the means, whether of common or Christian education to the people, that this external voluntaryism is set in motion. The negroes in the West Indies never would have combined to educate themselves. A spontaneous movement for this purpose, would never have been made from within. But it has been made from without; and government, it is said, has joined this latter movement, and placed £20,000 at the disposal of the London Missionary Society. What enlightened philanthropist does not rejoice in such a destination? or who would carry his sensitive and senseless antipathy to endowments so far, as to reclaim against a grant of this sort from the public treasury? The truth is, that government on the one hand, and the private contributors on the other, from the princely benefactor of a thousand guineas to the penny-

a-week subscriber, may all be regarded as the endowers of these West India schools. The same principle was in exercise at the outset of Christianity; and without its continued operation, the world will never be Christianized. When Paul would take nothing from the churches of Achaia, he in that instance abjured our modern Voluntaryism; and may be said to have endowed these churches by the aid which he received from other churches, or other Christians. Nay, he may be said *pro tanto*, to have endowed them himself. The produce of the handicraft of Paul the tent-maker, was turned into an endowment for the maintenance of Paul the Christian minister, who laboured in word and in doctrine among the people. There is an identity of application between this grant made by the liberality of the apostle for the benefit of the churches in Achaia, and any other grant made for any other churches whatever, in the present or bygone ages. The blind and headlong zeal which confounds, when it ought to discriminate, and makes distinctions when it ought to identify, is repelled by the very name of an endowment, however rightly and benevolently it is applied, or however virtuously it is administered,—not reflecting, or rather not knowing, that the principle which dictates such an endowment, is in truth the actuating principle of every generous effort for the propagation of Christianity both in ancient and modern times.

5. But the misapprehensions of which we complain, are not peculiar to the Voluntaries. They are exemplified by churchmen, who, however at-

tached to the principle of an endowment, as expressed in the terms of a general doctrine, seem at times, as will appear in the sequel, to lose their hold of it, when called on to make application of the principle to particular cases. The instance which we now proceed to offer, appears strongly to illustrate our assertion.

6. The inadequacy of the Established Churches to the religious wants of our population, has been felt in Scotland for many years. And till of late, an occasional erection in one place and another, of a Chapel of Ease, was the only expedient for repairing it. Historically, and in fact, it has added about one place of worship to the Establishment, for every addition which has taken place of twenty thousand to the numbers of the people,—sixty-six chapels having been constituted, during the increase of nearly one million and a half in the inhabitants of our country. For each twenty thousand, then, of new people, one church has been provided, which on the average will certainly not accommodate more than two thousand of them—leaving eighteen thousand of every such section unreached by the Establishment; and certainly not overtaken, beyond the extent of a very small fraction, by the Dissenters. This calculation is in full accord with the ecclesiastical surveys which have been made in all the more destitute places of our land—in the large towns, where, from a vicious practice of seat-letting, the churches are nearly monopolized by the higher and middle classes of society—in the recent suburbs of our increasing cities—in the recent villages or hamlets of our country parishes.

7. But the interesting observation to be made of these twenty thousand people is—the relative condition of the two thousand, who, by means of a Chapel of Ease, have found harbour within the Establishment, and of the eighteen thousand who have been left without its pale. Every addition to the general population of the country, implies an addition to the various ranks or classes of the community—to its capitalists and shopkeepers and respectable artisans at least, if not to its landed proprietors; while the great addition will be found to consist of the lowest class of its mechanics and labourers. They are two thousand, then, of the wealthier and better sort, who have been provided for under the old chapel system, or rather who under that system have provided for themselves. They are able to afford the high seat-rents which are indispensable in every unendowed place of worship; and it is the united sufficiency of their means, which has both built the chapel, and maintains the clergyman. They present us with a good specimen both of the powers and the limits of internal Voluntaryism—able, it would appear, to secure the means of religious instruction for two thousand out of twenty thousand; but not able to overtake the mighty remainder of eighteen thousand that is left. Had it been so able, the aid both of external Voluntaryism and of state endowments, would have been alike uncalled for. We have no quarrel with this internal Voluntaryism. We are thankful for its services, as an auxiliary in the business of Christian education, and should like to foster and call forth its capabilities to the uttermost.

We rejoice in the little which it does, and only lament that it can do no more. It is never with its performances, but only with its pretensions, that we have held any hostile reckoning—more especially when it makes boast of its own omnipotence; and when nothing will satisfy it but the destruction of the Established churches, and of all their endowments, that it may be furnished with a clear territory for the exercise and display of its own energies. Had it but overtaken the surplus which the Establishment has left out, we should have felt more confident in its ability to fill the whole length and breadth of the land, on the Establishment being destroyed. But we must have better experience of its efficiency than we have yet had, ere we can resign with comfort the whole territory into its hands.

8. But let us now attend to the footing on which our Chapels of Ease have been hitherto constituted and maintained. Generally speaking, the minister is supported by his hearers who built the chapel at the first; and who, by their seat-rents, aided to a greater or less extent by their Sabbath collections, defray all the annual expenses of the concern. The heaviest of these expenses is a requisite income for the clergyman, which, generally speaking, is not left to fluctuate from year to year with the proceeds of the chapel; but is a certain stated annuity, which does not preclude however its being augmented from time to time, if the increase and prosperity of the congregation should admit of it. This annuity is liable, on the other hand, to diminution from the decline of the chapel revenue; though, to prevent

this diminution from going beyond a certain point, there did obtain till recently in the Dissent, and does obtain still in the Establishment, the practice of requiring a bond for the stipend of the minister. By this bond more or fewer individuals of sufficient substance and credit, become sureties for the payment of a certain annuity to the clergyman. Such bonds for yearly payments to the minister, have been of very various amount—in one instance, we believe, so high as £400 a-year; though, were we to strike an average on the practice, till within these two or three years, we might state it perhaps at £150. Now, it never was the imagination in any of these transactions, whether in the church-courts or by the minister or among the subscribers themselves, that they the subscribers were necessarily or even probably to become donors or endowers for the stipend, by the step into which they had entered. The eyes of all the parties were open to the circumstances of the chapel; and the transaction proceeded upon the imagination that its likely proceeds would more than cover the obligation that was incurred—would at least indemnify, and generally even with a surplus, those individuals who had thus come forward as securities for the regular payment of at least so much of the stipend. When the engagement was contracted at all, it was never with the belief that they would need to supplement by their gifts the insufficiency of the concern for the support of the clergyman; but with the directly opposite belief, that the chapel would be able of itself for all its own expenses. It was in fact an expression of confidence on the part of

the subscribers in the productiveness of the chapel; and virtually then upon this productiveness, the granting of its constitution was made to turn.

9. Now, premising that in every district chapel *where a bond can be had*, we are not unfriendly to the practice, but conceive it to be attended with many advantages; still we can understand how, viewed as an object of contemplation, and for the purpose of appreciating its effect and character, there should be such an exceeding diversity in men's feelings and judgment regarding it; and that, of all others, it is the very object on which, if a dispute shall be raised, Voluntaries and Churchmen will be seen either to change places, or to stand in motley conjunction together, sometimes on one and sometimes on the other side of the question. It is a question, in fact, which of all others requires to be viewed completely and comprehensively, else the respective parties will strangely traverse their own principles, and as strangely misname and misapprehend the principles of their opponents. There is in truth a curious assemblage of elements which meet together in this matter of a bond—some dipt in the very essence of Voluntaryism, and others in that of the Establishment; and so as to require a work of somewhat painful disentanglement, ere the nature and tendency of the whole can be fully appreciated.

10. First, then, a chapel bond when it can be had, has its advantages. For first, it affords a security for the continuance of a Christian ministration in that chapel during the incumbency of the existing clergyman, who at least is not compelled

by absolute starvation to relinquish it. Second, When it is a bond for a sufficient income, it ensures a decent provision for the clergyman. And Lastly, Which is greatest of all, it saves him from that glaring and immediate dependence on the people who enjoy his services, which is fitted in a certain way to injure the moral effect of them. There are a thousand benefits of a precious and very high order, attendant on the practice of week-day and household ministrations; and, more particularly, as being the likeliest expedient for bringing together or keeping together a congregation. Now we cannot conceive a more hurtful imagination, should it once enter into the minds of the people whom the minister labours to reclaim, than if they begin shrewdly to suspect that he is seeking not them but theirs; or, in other words, that by all this activity, he is but beating up for recruits to his congregation, and that, to enlarge his seat-rents. Every idea of such an imputation, as if he laboured not for their benefit but for his own income, is enough to make a minister ashamed of his exertions; or if he do persevere with them through good report and bad report, to injure their effect for a time at least; and till the Christian worth and benevolence and genuine nobility of his soul have been fully manifested. Now a bond, if it do not altogether remove, at least alleviates this grievous inconvenience—lightening somewhat this great moral incubus on the influence and usefulness of a clergyman, who, if truly devoted to the objects of his high calling, would acquit himself with far greater success, and obtain a far more powerful ascendancy over the

families of his vineyard, were he in the enjoyment of perfect independence, and above the reach of any possible aspersion on the disinterestedness of his labours. And besides all this, there is an incidental good in a bond which ought not to be overlooked. When its subscribers reside within that district for the benefit of which the church has been raised, it gives them an interest in the seats being well occupied, and enlists their natural influence among neighbours and acquaintances on the side of a general attendance. There is no such drawback attendant on this lay interest in the concern turning out a prosperous one, as on a clerical interest being directly and immediately bound up therewith. It is well that the clergyman is removed, though but to the distance of one step, from such a gross and ungenerous association. If but made sure of his income, this restores the aspect of disinterestedness to his ministrations—an aspect and a character so important for the proper effect of them. And even, though justice to the men who have hazarded their property by affixing their signatures to his bond should be one of the motives which prompts the unwearied assiduity of his ministerial services, this is but the right feeling of every honourable and conscientious man; and there is nothing in the manifestation of such a feeling, to alloy the character or effect of his ministrations.*

* The reader will observe that we annex a virtue to the circumstance of the bond being subscribed by residents and people of natural influence within the chapel district, which would not be realised if the bond were subscribed by men of wealth from beyond the district, who had no acquaintance with its families,

11. Such are the undoubted advantages of the bond; but ere we make it a *sine qua non*, it should be well considered, to what extent it is possible to realize it. Let it never be forgotten that bonds are practicable only in as far as voluntaryism itself is practicable; and that both the one system and the other have precisely the same limits and the same capabilities. It is curious to observe the

and no natural influence over them. Such men might be the builders of the chapel; but were they over and above this to subscribe a bond for the maintenance of the clergyman, they might incur the risk of becoming virtually its endowers also. The danger is greatly aggravated, if the person who has been appointed to the charge shall be devoid of all sensibility and all conscience on the subject of their losses; and if, alike careless either of their interest or of his own solemn responsibilities and duties, he shall be at no pains to attract or to retain a congregation. The independence of a good clergyman has in it a great moral advantage, but where is the remedy when this independence is so abused by a bad one? We are aware of no remedy but a virtuous exercise of authority on the part of the church, whether by presbyterial visitations or otherwise; and, if the church will neglect its own obligations, we cannot imagine a stronger practical triumph to the cause of voluntaryism on the one hand, or a stronger practical argument against either bonds or endowments on the other, than what the church herself would, by her own culpable neglect, put into the mouths of her deadliest enemies. In England there may be a legal necessity for which the church there is not responsible; but in Scotland there is no such necessity, save in as far as it may have been created by the ecclesiastical pettifoggers of her own body. In the black catalogue of human offences, we are not aware of a more grievous delinquency, or of one which more imperiously calls for the exercise of a vigorous discipline, than the enormity of that man's transgression, who enters on the duties of a parish or congregation under false colours, and who, after he is securely fixed in the temporalities of his office, abandons himself to his own selfishness; at one time, if in possession of a stipend, bidding defiance to the patron or the electors who have appointed him; at another time, and if in possession of a bond, bidding like defiance to the men who gave him their confidence, and whom he in return for it has grossly deceived.

zealots of an establishment contending in every instance for the necessity of a bond, and refusing to take a single step for the extension of the church without one—when in fact, if the church could be extended on such a principle, and so as to meet the wants of all the population, this were the strongest practical demonstration that voluntaryism was all-sufficient for the country, and that an established church was therefore uncalled for. Each bond in fact carries in it the expression of an homage to the sufficiency of the voluntary system, inasmuch as it is to the produce of the seat-rents that the subscribers of our bonds look for their indemnification and their safety. It is the likely amount of this produce which inspires their confidence, when they affix their signatures to the written obligation. And, accordingly, as if to avoid every thing that could shake this confidence, it has not been the habit of the church to lay any restraint on the seat-rents. In general, the managers are left at liberty to exact as high seat-rents as can be had—an object in which we might proceed without embarrassment so long as our only aim is the provision of an income sufficiently high for the minister, and not of an accommodation sufficiently cheap for the common people. But this last, it is well known, is the great object of the efforts which are now being made for the extension of the church; and there is the utmost difficulty (amounting, we think, to impossibility, till endowments shall be granted) in combining these two objects—the object on the one hand of a right status for the minister, with the object on

the other, of sittings low enough for the working-classes. This is not a difficulty of imagination, but of experimental feeling, growing every day more intense with every multiplication of new places upon our hands; and pressing upon us more and more with every new erection. If not adequately met, we foresee that it will lay an arrest, or at least inflict the evil of a very grievous retardation and delay on the whole enterprise.

12. It is perfectly clear, in the first instance, that, if we ask a bond, we impose the necessity of a seat-rent high enough for its liquidation. This was all very well, so long as the newly erected Church had no special direction towards the lower orders of society, and was not made specially to bear on any given territorial district, with a view to the accommodation of one and all of the families, however poor, within its limits. Before our enterprise of church extension took its present distinct and particular aim, that is to the Christian education of the people at large, chapels were erected, and constitutions were given, to which bonds were always held as indispensable pre-requisites; but then they were left at liberty to exact such seat rents as they could obtain, and to range over the whole circumambient neighbourhood for hearers, rich enough to pay, and who might come to them from all points of the compass, and at all distances. At this rate, each new chapel operated far and near on the superficies of society, and drew its congregation, made up of scantlings, from the higher and middle classes, of the wide-spread neighbourhood around it. But it scarcely

told on the general mass of the common people beneath ; and, accordingly, chapels can be named, and to which, too, parishes have been recently annexed of three thousand people, and where not one in a hundred in very many of the districts, especially if they be at all of a plebeian character, go to the place of worship that has been nominally assigned for them. The truth is, that all these new churches, with their high seat-rents, graze over the heads of the great majority of our working-classes, and leave in their respective vicinities a mass of irreligion and ignorance as entire and unbroken as before they had a being.

13. The question then recurs, how shall we manage so as to get at these common people ? It is quite clear, that if we continue, as heretofore, with such bonds as compel us to strain at the highest seat-rents which can be had, we make no descent among the working-classes of society, but only enter into competition with all the previous chapels, on the higher arena of the upper and middle classes. Now let it well be observed, that this is but a limited market, affording only a certain number of customers ; and that this market is already overstocked—yes, and will always be more and more so, with every addition made to the number of our new erections, which, so long as we persevere in our present system, must, to be filled at all, just go into conflict with their predecessor chapels, and, if successful, make out an attendance from the thinnings of previous congregations. At this rate, little or no progress is made among the outfield population. We only play and alternate

along the limit that we have reached already; but scarcely, if at all, carry that limit onward among those, whom yet it is our distinct and specific aim to bring within the pale of gospel opportunities and gospel ordinances. With these erections of ours we shall, if compelled to do as heretofore, but injure the ministers of the existing chapels by the drafts that we make on their existing congregations. We shall but do them harm; and with little or no good to that humbler, but greatly more numerous class, whose peculiar benefit in truth is the moving principle of the Church Extension Scheme. If saddled with such a bond as compels the necessity of a high seat-rent, we must lay ourselves out for such customers as can make it good. We cannot afford to keep within our districts; but going in quest of the wealthiest hearers that can be found, the peculiar care of the poor and the principle of territorial cultivation must continue as heretofore to be disregarded.

14. The only way, then, by which to benefit the yet unreclaimed mass, is to keep ourselves distinct from those previous congregations which have been formed on altogether another principle than ours; is to meet the circumstances of the labouring classes with seat-rents low enough, and at the same time to retain a preference for our sittings to the people of the district that we have assumed for the place of worship which we have raised in the midst of it—assigning to the minister or missionary who shall officiate there, not the task of filling his church any how, but the peculiar task of filling that church out of that district. At

Newhaven in North Leith—at St Mark's in Glasgow—at the Water of Leith, Edinburgh—at Gilmerton, in the parish of Libberton, and innumerable other localities, there are materials for filling one and all of their respective churches, without drawing one hearer from any of the pre-existent congregations. But then to gather in these materials, a low seat-rent is indispensable; and there is positively no other way in which the extension of the church can be effectually carried forward. This alone is real church extension. The other is not an extension: it is but an alternation or a transference—an addition to the dead architecture of the church, without any addition to the number of its living worshippers. To make out this last is the great object of our Assembly's scheme; but, without a territorial principle, and low seat-rents together, we repeat, the scheme will turn out a miserable abortion; and if we do persevere in a system that necessitates a general high seat-rent in our new churches, we defeat the very purpose on which our hearts are set, and with our own hands stultify our own enterprise.

15. Little do those Churchmen imagine who think they do homage to an Establishment, when they keep so tenaciously by a bond—little do they imagine how fondly all the while they are clinging to the principles of the Voluntary system. They are refusing to extend the church any farther than the seat-rents of the hearers will allow them. By refusing in every instance, a constitution without a bond, they are proclaiming to the world, that

they will carry out the church only to the extent that the Voluntary principle will let them. They in truth are circumscribing themselves within the limits of Voluntaryism, and of the worst and weakest species of it too, within the limits of internal Voluntaryism. They are in fact saying to their beloved church, "thus far thou shalt go, and no farther;" and with all their expressed, nay honestly felt antipathy to Voluntaryism, they would manacle the Establishment within its narrow enclosure, and are inflicting upon the church which they profess to idolize, all the decrepitude and all the helplessness of Voluntaryism.

16. We repeat it, and all the more anxiously, that on this subject we have been misrepresented and misunderstood; take a bond when you can get it, but don't insist upon it in a locality so poor, and with seat-rents so low, if that locality is to have the benefit of the erection, that no bond can be obtained, because of the precarious and insufficient guarantee for the safety of the bondsmen. Above all, do not expect that the generous and disinterested builders shall become the bondsmen also, for the payment of stipends to the clergymen. Do not tell them, after they have done so much by their past or present sacrifices, that their benevolence will be altogether frustrated, unless they furthermore will take upon themselves the burden of a future and prospective obligation. Observe the altogether new and different footing, on which these churches are placed at your disposal. The managers do not come now and say, this is our property from the proceeds of which we are to

receive interest for the sums advanced by us, and at length a principal for the payment of them all. They make it over to us, the church, as our property; and bid us dispose of its whole proceeds for the Christian good of the neighbourhood in which they have raised it. It is brought to us, not as their speculation, but as their gift. So long as it was a speculation in their hands, their object was to make the seat-rents as high as possible; and then it was a very right proposition from us, —out of their anticipated proceeds, how little will you appropriate to yourselves, and for how much will you become bound to the minister? But, now that it is a gift in our hands, it is our object, for the sake of the families of our general population, to make these seat-rents as low as possible; and in this altered state of things, we are not in circumstances to ask these men to become bound for any thing. They have already acquitted themselves fully and nobly, not as lenders but as givers; and we cannot ask these men, after having incurred the burden of a large present sacrifice, to incur the further burden of an unknown and prospective obligation. In the erection which we ourselves have to do with, we have got a number of individuals to subscribe, and that most liberally, of their money. We could not look them in the face, and ask them after this to subscribe a bond. We could not follow up our experience, and our grateful sense of their generosity, by a fresh exaction of this sort. And observe a twofold obstacle here. First; we have now donors, and not lenders to deal with; and though we can ask the latter to give up a

part of the produce, of which they retain the other part, we cannot ask the former, who have made over all part and interest in the produce whatever. But, secondly, the bondsmen on the old system had a high seat-rent to come and go upon; if they are to be bondsmen on the new, they will have a low seat-rent to come and go upon. Over and above the present which they have made to us, shall we ask them to incur the same obligation with their less generous predecessors, and without the same means for making it good? A bond under the old system was based on a hypothec which could sustain it—the good and solid foundation of a high and well-paid seat-rent. A bond under the new system, where the object is to provide for the poorest of the land, has no such basis to rest upon; and of such bonds we ask, are we to make the best benefactors of the church the bondsmen? Is this to be our return for their liberality, that ere we give effect to it, they must come under the yoke of such a bond or bondage as this—the Egyptian bondage of making bricks without straw?

17. Now this is beginning to tell, and to tell adversely on our cause, in various parts of the Church of Scotland. If not provided against, it will lay an arrest on that enterprise of church extension which has begun so hopefully. Men will not subscribe for a fabric, if they find it is to land them in the burden of a responsibility for a stipend also. Even the most liberal of men, and the most willing to make a large present sacrifice, if justified by their present means, will not commit themselves to the unknown future by an engage-

ment ever so small, or even by a prospect of liability ever so unlikely. There is human nature in this. Man will encounter a certainty, and brave it, even to the surrender, and willing surrender too, of a very large sum; but he shrinks from coming under the power of a contingency; or, in other words, he will give a handsome subscription, but he will not sign a bond. He will cheerfully suffer a definite loss, but he will not suffer an indefinite liability to hang about him, and to haunt his imagination and his fears. This feeling is now coming into sensible operation, where fabrics are on the eve of their completion; and the next topic has succeeded, of an arrangement for ministers to fill them. And it is working most injuriously to our cause. For example, it has suspended the progress of the subscription in Glasgow. The munificent sum of twenty-four thousand pounds raised in that city, might now have reached to thirty or forty thousand, had it not been for this very question. A controversy has arisen, and rather than become bondsmen, even the most generous and free-hearted of these munificent contributors, who have put down their £200 each to the enterprise, begin now to experience a painful recoil, and would sink one half of the whole money raised in endowing, before proceeding any farther. In other words, we shall only have half the number of new churches that we might otherwise have had but for this matter of the bond; and individuals must be called upon to endow as well as to build —thus taking the whole duty out of the hands of Government, and striking on the head that goodly

arrangement so hopeful, I had almost said, so sure of its completion, in a very few years, if but once entered on—even that the country should supply fabrics, and that government should supply a small or partial endowment for them. Sure we are that the only way to bring on the endowment is to multiply the fabrics. The only way to prevail on government to do its part, is to exhibit the spectacle of the country, from one end to another of it, nobly doing theirs. There was nothing which more staggered even the deadliest enemies of our application last summer in London, than the fact of sixty-four new churches being raised, or in process of raising, by the hands of private benevolence, and that under the impulse of a felt and practical necessity. Nothing gave a clearer demonstration to the reality and magnitude of the crying evil, which it is the object of this whole enterprise to provide against. The architecture is the precursor of the endowment. If we lay an arrest upon the one, we shall have to wait, and to wait everlastingly for the other. To multiply the fabrics is the way to make sure and effective aim for the endowments. It is only thus that we make a right outset for the object, and only thus that, by the power of moral compulsion, we shall carry it.

18. To bring more distinctly to view the precise effect of these bonds, if they are to be insisted on in all circumstances, and whatever be the poverty of the districts for which the new churches are designed, let us look to each of the two great parts of our undertaking separately. For the extension of our churches, what we want is, first, a sufficient

number of fabrics in which the people might congregate as their places of worship; and, secondly, a sufficient maintenance for the clergymen who shall officiate in these places. For the former of these objects we are attempting to acquire a fund from the liberality of individuals. For the latter we are attempting to obtain an endowment from the state.

19. Now as to the first, the effect of these bonds in cramping and discouraging private liberality, in every case where that liberality is most needed, or for the supply of our most destitute population, must be quite obvious. They will prove, if persisted in, a sad incubus on the generosity and the spirit of contributors; and if that incubus be not removed, we prophesy that the Assembly's fund will soon shrink into a very little thing. Fabrics will cease to be multiplied; and even the cause of endowments will lose the benefit of that moral compulsion which lies in the number of these fabrics, and in the influence of their supporters. This effect was not palpable so long as high seat-rents could be obtained; or, in other words, so long as chapels were erected mainly at the instigation and on the demand of the middle and higher classes of society. But now that their specific aim is the accommodation of the working-classes, now that a low seat-rent is an indispensable element in the success of the operation, we shall positively strangle our own enterprise in the birth, if we do not greatly reduce these bonds; or, what perhaps is better on many accounts, in certain instances at least, dispense with them altogether. They work

a twofold mischief, first, a direct one in lessening that fund by which new churches are raised; and, second, an indirect one, by lessening the argument which the very magnitude of that fund, and the very number of these churches supplied—an argument, the efficacy of which if not thus checked and impeded, will at length prevail upon our rulers in favour of an endowment.

20. But perhaps the most decisive consideration which can be adduced against them is, not their indirect, but their direct or immediate effect as a bar in the way of an endowment. A bond for the support of the minister, and this too sustained on means which somehow or other exist among his sitters and his supporters, argues a sufficiency in the whole concern which seems to leave any interference of aid from the hands of government as a thing wholly uncalled for. They will not step forward to help a thing which looks as if it rested on a good firm basis of its own. They will not endow for the mere purpose of releasing these bondsmen from their engagements. It is true that, with some difficulty, their claim to an endowment, and that notwithstanding their bonds, could be made good. We could tell them, if they had patience to listen, that with a bond and the necessity of a high seat-rent to discharge its obligation, the chapel was altogether unavailable for the Christian education of the common people. This may at length be made out to their satisfaction, but at a far greater expense both of time and trouble than folks have any notion of. It is not so easy a matter when a question comes to be

complicated with an element that requires explanation to dispose of, it is not known to what extent that single element will operate against it, and how year after year it may stand as an obstacle in the way of our success. Once get our adversaries to harp upon a bond, and this will deafen our application for an endowment we know not how long; but we know well that if there be but one plausibility in the way, it may require years to dislodge it —whether from the minds of our rulers in London, worried as they are by thousands of questions which follow each other in trooping succession all the day long; or from the minds of commissioners out of London, mystified as they are by the conflicting testimonies and representations of hostile witnesses. And meanwhile this said bond does act as a screen of interception between the eyes of government and the real merits of our claim. It in fact veils from their discernment what we call the *ipsa corpora* of the question. Take away this delusive intermedium; and when they look to the case in its nakedness, they in the first instance see an ecclesiastical labourer accomplishing a great service—reclaiming the families of a territorial district, aliens before from the decencies of a Christian land, to habits of regular attendance on a territorial church, and a willing submission of themselves to the teaching and moral surveillance of their new minister; and, with no other support than what is derived from the collections and seat-rents of the people, themselves in destitute circumstances, and which support must therefore be either a very penurious or a very precarious one. On

the other hand, though it be a great deal too little for him to receive, it is also a great deal too much for them to give, (for we shall never be able to let down the seat-rents sufficiently till we have gained an endowment,) and more especially if out of their hard-won earnings they strain after that most desirable object, the occupation of a whole family pew for themselves and their little ones. On such simple data, the government will listen with a willing ear to us, when we ask them to step forward and make these odds even,—give an endowment that, in the first place, this man might have enough to live upon; but couple this endowment with as low a seat-rent as possible, that, in the second place, these people may have cheap enough pews to put themselves and their children into. This is the proper and presentable condition in which to place our cause before the eyes of a patriotic government. The bond throws a disguise over the strength and the sinews of our argument; and should we persist in these bonds in all possible varieties of situation, then, if our zeal for the extension of the church be indeed an honest one, we commit the egregious folly, first of hatching an enterprise, and then of killing that enterprise at the birth. We inflict a twofold blow; and both together will prove a finishing stroke to our cause, reaching as it must to each several branch of our twofold dependence—we mean the fund for new churches, produce of the liberality of private individuals; and the fund for the maintenance of the clergyman, produce of the endowment we are now seeking at the hands of government.

These bonds, if we will adhere to them, doggedly and universally, must discourage the one fund; they must utterly defeat the other.

21. But here we are met with the demand that, before meddling with an old system, we should be prepared to substitute another and a better system in its place. We have been urging the monstrous inconvenience of bonds in certain localities; but ere they shall be set aside, we are required to propose a scheme that shall be free of inconvenience. The church, it is said, will not consent to give up her invariable practice of requiring a bond, even in a few instances, because of the one exception that we allege against it, unless some new practice can be specified that shall be unexceptionable, and have no difficulty, no inconvenience attending it.

22. Now, this we hold to be met, and adequately met by the question, if we really could lay down a system free of inconvenience, what becomes of our plea for endowments? It is because of the great, and the urgent, and the unavoidable evils attendant on every scheme wherein endowments are wanting, that we can hold up our faces to the application which we now make for them. When you ask us for an unexceptionable scheme without endowments, you ask an impossibility at our hands. The legislation that we now propose is not for a permanent state of things, but for the likeliest means by which we shall arrive at it. Ours, let it ever be recollected, is not a terminating scheme, but a scheme *in transitu*. We are not considering at present what is the best landing-place, but what is the best

road to that landing-place. We have not yet the means in our hand for instituting a system of optimism, or that state of things which is best for endurance; and meanwhile we do all that we can, all that ought to be required of us, if we propose what is best for speeding on our transition to the system of optimism. And we feel confident that it is not the bonded system which is the most effectual for this object. So far from helping forward the most desirable consummation, they form an obstacle in its way. An endowment never will be granted, but on most clear and palpable demonstration being given, of its subservience to the Christian instruction of the common people. The mischief of a bond is, that it will not only be urged, but, we fear, prevailingly urged with any administration; and nothing in these times of misplaced economy will avail our object, but as unambiguous a case of necessity as was made out for those immense parishes in the north, those Highland clachans which obtained, and on the plea of their poverty alone, not an endowment only, but an erection and an endowment for upwards of forty new parishes. We, on the other hand, have met government half way. We have made the first step in the enterprise. We have erected upwards of a hundred new churches by means of private liberality; and our expectation is, that, on the strength of an application so accredited, coupled with the undoubted poverty of the people, we shall carry the acquiescence of Parliament in our views. But we most certainly will not succeed, if we persist in keeping bonds upon all these

churches. Take the case of so many mendicant persons; it surely were not their best policy for drawing forth the liberality of the benevolent, that they put cockades upon their hats, or held themselves forth to public observation in any of the insignia of gentlemen. Now, in the spirit of unfeeling obloquy, our fabrics, raised as they are for the accommodation of the poor and working-classes (and it is they, and not we, who have been cruelly taunted with the appellation,) have been stigmatised as so many mendicant churches. And it is most true that they are so; and all I want is, that we should not insist universally, and at all times, on putting these bonds, these cockades upon them, or in holding them forth with the insignia, or under an aspect of sufficiency which they really do not possess. We cannot imagine a more infatuated policy than that of decking them out in these borrowed feathers, when in fact the great moving force by which we can ever hope to expedite our cause, and at length to carry it—is the monthly increasing number of these plebeian, territorial, but withal bondless churches. It is only a united cry from these that will wring the indispensable boon from the hands of an unwilling government, whose eyes may yet be opened even to the economical wisdom of the measure—convinced perhaps, at last, that the education of the common people, and more especially their Christian education, is the best and cheapest defence of the nation. We have been complained of in some quarters of the church as if our application for the endowment of new places of worship had swamped the first, the original

application for the endowment of pre-existent chapels. On the contrary, instead of obstructing these endowments, it will pioneer the way to them; and it is on the strength of our far more convincing, because unambiguous claims, that a universal provision, a provision for all the unendowed churches, will be ultimately carried.

23. The whole of our argument may be resolved into a few distinct considerations, each of which we shall now state separately, and in order.

24. First, we do not plead for the abolition of the bond, but for a dispensation from it in special circumstances—in those circumstances, we mean, of extreme poverty, where no people within the new ecclesiastical district are to be had, of substance and security enough for such an obligation; or when the obligation, if incurred, would compel a seat-rent that would shut the doors of the new church against the mass of its own territorial families. Let every constitution that may be framed for such a locality imbody, as one of its articles, a condition for low-rented sittings, so low, at least, as three shillings each, for one-half of the whole accommodation; and let a bond be rigidly exacted in every instance where the managers refuse to purchase their exemption from it, by giving over this number of low priced sittings for the good of the parochial community. In this way the article of dispensation from a bond, will be made to turn on the article of a reduced and regulated scale of seat-rents. It will be an indulgence given by the Presbytery, in return for the sacrifice made by the proprietors of the new place

of worship. There is no indiscriminate or sweeping innovation here. The old system of the bond will continue, wherever the old system of high and general seat-letting is continued; and the new system will only take effect in those particular cases where the great and obvious purpose is to be served by it, of ensuring an accommodation cheap enough to meet the peculiar exigencies of a church, which realizes the two characteristics of being both a territorial and a plebeian one. All we want is, that whenever a case of this kind occurs, a bond shall not be held imperative and indispensable. Let not the church tie itself up by the enactment of a bond, that, without regard to peculiarities or distinctions of any sort, shall be held compulsory in all cases. Let there be a discretion in this matter in the hands of the Presbytery. Else there will ever remain a barrier in the way of new churches which all our efforts cannot force. There are many aggregates of population, both in town and country, where the exaction of a bond were tantamount to an authoritative edict by the church against the preaching of the gospel to the poor. We are not at present discussing the alternative whether a bonded or a bondless church is the better institute for the Christian education of our people; but the alternative is forced upon us, and it is for Christian ministers to determine between the two sides of it, whether it is better to provide a given district with a bondless church, or that it shall have no church at all.

25. But it has been said that though a bond cannot be had from the poor residenters within the

district, such a bond may be had from the rich and benevolent who are without. In other words, it is expected that individuals shall endow as well as build, and there is a sort of presentiment or hope, that they who have done so much as provide the fabric, will do so much more as become bound for a stipend to the minister. We can imagine nothing more revoltingly ungenerous than this; or more fitted to exhibit the Church in the light of a voracious shark never to be soothed, never to be satisfied. Because philanthropists have done perhaps their uttermost to build the Church, this is the advantage to be taken of them. Rather than that their benevolence should be frustrated, they will surely, over and above this, subscribe the bond. In other words, because men are to be had who love the Church, and make it the idol of their affections, the Church, in return for their costly offerings, becomes a Shylock to these men; and the recompense for their present sacrifices is that they, and their families after them, shall be loaded with prospective obligations. The subscriptions and liberalities of the church's friends will speedily terminate, if this is to be the hard and the thankless upshot of them.

26. And here it may be asked, when so much is expected at all hands for the Christian education of our now destitute thousands—is the Church, seeking in every direction the means and facilities for this great enterprise, to make no concession, no sacrifice of her own? To make good the high object both of patriotism and of piety on which she is now set, government are asked to give, for at

least the partial maintenance of the clergyman; benevolent individuals are asked to give in the way of external Voluntaryism, for the erection of a place of worship; even the people themselves, on the principle of internal Voluntaryism are asked to give, and make up, by their collections and seat-rents, the full support of their minister; and will the Church, in the midst of these contributions from various quarters, make no offering, and evince no liberality in the cause? It is not enough to say in her excuse, that she has not the power to give, whatever may be her disposition. We do not require at present that she shall enlarge her disposition to give. It will answer all our immediate purpose, if she will only lessen her disposition to receive. When all others are applied to for a surrender to the cause, will she make no surrender herself, nor move a footstep—unless, guaranteed from all inconvenience, her provision be first made sure, and the mantle of protection against all privations, poverty, and pain, be first thrown over her? Doubtless, all this ought to be provided for her by the wealthy, when she labours among them; by the wealthy too, when she labours to reclaim a people who are neither able nor willing to repay her ministrations; and, in defect of these, by the magistrate, whose duty it is, in the capacity of a nursing-father to the church, to devise measures for the moral well-being of the commonwealth. But in this day of indifference and hostility, must the church do nothing to supply their lack of service? Are others left to make all the sacrifices, and must all the safety, and none of the risk and suffering

be her's? Will she encounter no hazard, no contingency, for the sake of the thousands who are perishing at her door? Has the gospel, in these sunken and degenerate days, now lost its distinctive character of being preached to the poor? Has the church renounced the apostolical character she had at the commencement of Christianity; or the Church of Scotland ceased from that missionary zeal wherewith she overspread the then desolated parishes of the land, at the commencement of her own reformation? Have the devotedness and self-denial of former times altogether fled? And unless upholden in the secure temporalities of the ministerial office, unless the safe and sufficient bargain has been previously struck, are these masses of irreligion to be left unentered on? and, while thousands of families around us are sunk in spiritual destitution, must no effort be made to seek, must no arm be stretched forth to save them?

27. We do not put these questions reproachfully, or as if to awaken a zeal in the church that is now lying dormant; for we are confident of a full sympathy and response in the breasts of many hundreds of our clergymen. They are willing that the church should throw herself abroad over the million at least of her surplus population, even as she did two hundred years ago, when this formed the number of her entire population; and the land, rifled wholly of its endowments, was overspread with labourers at a venture, who gathered in the families as they could, and at length created such an interest in the cause, as to compel from the hands of an unwilling Government the stinted allow-

ances of the present day.* Another such effort would bring the same moral compulsion along with it. Wherever labourers are to be found, qualified and willing for the service, let not the church discourage them, nor put any let and hinderance in their way. Let her go forth fearlessly to the work, even with the hazard of a scanty remuneration. Our new churches would multiply under such a system; and the united call of the ever-increasing numbers that congregated around them would at length prevail over a reluctant or incredulous administration. Nor would the liberalities and the efforts of the benevolent be wanting to smooth this midway passage to endowments, and to uphold both that church and those churches' servants and sons who had so nobly braved the perils of the enterprise. Let us but seek first the extension of Christ's kingdom and its righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto us. Let the church make full demonstration of its Christian patriotism in behalf of the poor, and both the wealth and the power of the land will at length acknowledge her.†

* Dr M'Crie informs us, that at a meeting of the ministers, in the Little Church, Edinburgh, "David Ferguson, the oldest minister in the Church, rose and gave an account of the first planting of the Reformed Church in Scotland. He was one of six individuals, he said, who engaged in that work, when the name of stipends was unknown, when they had to encounter the united opposition of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and could scarcely reckon on the countenance and support of any person of note or of worldly estimation; yet they firmly and fearlessly persevered, and Providence crowned their labours with success."—*Life of Andrew Melville*, vol. ii. p. 60.

† On this subject Bishop Burnet expresses himself as follows:—"Certainly nothing can so much dispose the nation to think on the necessity of relieving the many small livings, as their seeing the clergy setting about their business to purpose.—

28. But without resting on generalities alone, let us make distinct exposition of the various practicable steps by which we propose to reach the consummation that we seek after,—practicable in large towns certainly, though not so much so, it is to be feared, in our remote and Highland parishes. We pre-suppose, first, a missionary supported by the benevolent, in his attempts to reclaim the families of a particular district to a Sabbath ministration—conducted by himself, in the largest school-room, or perhaps warehouse, that is to be had within its limits. This is the first step. The second is, when encouraged by the success wherewith he has congregated an audience, a subscription for a new church is entered on for the object of their better accommodation, and it is at length erected at the expense of so many contributors. The next is the partial filling of this church by the people of the district, but at such a moderate seat-rent as is suited to their humble circumstances. Then and not till then let the application for a constitution be made to the Presbytery, who can take cognizance both of all the present means and all the future likelihoods of the undertaking. It is only when, in accommodation to the peculiar indigence of the territorial families, an article of

This would, by the blessing of God, be the most effectual means of stopping the progress of atheism, and of the contempt the clergy lies under. It would go a great way towards the healing our schism, and would be the chief step that could possibly be made towards the procuring to us such laws as are yet wanting to the completing our Reformation, and the mending the condition of so many of our poor brethren who are languishing in want and great straits."—*Pastoral Care*, p. 207.

limitation on the seat-rents is proposed—then, and then only is it, that we contend for a dispensation from the article requiring a bond. The one condition is suspended on the other; so that, unless the obligation of the first is submitted to, the obligation of a low seat-rent, the indulgence held out by the second will not be expected. There is no enactment against a bond here, but only a release from it in certain circumstances, brought under the notice and arbitration of the church courts. All we require is, that they will not interdict a church when a bond cannot possibly be had. The controversy is not whether a bonded or a bondless church forms a better apparatus for the Christian instruction of the families in a given district; but whether the families of that district shall be allowed the services of a bondless church, or shall have no church at all. Do not let the enterprise for such a church be blasted, because you cannot command a legal security for a stipend to its minister. You may have a reasonable security notwithstanding, for a time at least, until an endowment shall be granted; and the following are the items of which that security is composed:—First, the same benevolence which supported the missionary, and erected a church for him, forms in itself a temporary guarantee at least for some sort of maintenance to the clergyman,—the same annual subscription for his maintenance as a missionary being prolonged, when necessary for his maintenance as the minister of the new church. The bond would at once repress this subscription, and dry up one supply that we at present are counting

on. Second, the Sabbath collection of the church doors should be reserved for the same object, to be given up for the support of the poor in the district, in exchange for that endowment of which we never lose sight as the landing-place of the enterprise. A bond would certainly tell unfavourably on the amount of this collection, and so lessen another of the supplies which we at present are counting on. But, third, in defect of the absolute security that is now given, there may be a conditional security, in many instances of far greater value than the absolute one. After the deduction of certain necessary expenses, the whole produce of the seat-rents might be secured to the minister,—moderate certainly, because the seat-rents are low, but tolerably sure, and more especially if the Presbytery will defer giving a constitution till a certain specified proportion of the sittings shall have been taken by the people within the district. And to strengthen this security the more, there is not the same objection to high present demands that there is to prospective obligations. The constitution may be deferred till the chapel be wholly unindebted, or at least till the debt shall be reduced within a certain fraction of the expense of the fabric. We do not say that all these provisions will supersede the desirableness of an endowment, which, both for a still lower seat-rent to the people, and a more stable maintenance to the clergyman, should be prosecuted to the uttermost. But we say that, altogether, they form a reasonable security for the being and continuance of the church till this object

be attained, and such as to make wholly inexcusable the denial of a constitution in these circumstances—tantamount to the unfeeling denial of the gospel to the poor, and because they are poor. We cannot imagine a more revolting exhibition than this, or one in more glaring contravention to the spirit of an apostolic church. If persisted in, the contempt and detestation of society will be its unfailing and rightful consequence. Desertion and overthrow will be the bitter fruits of such an apostasy from the method and principles of our forefathers.

29. It will be marvellous if the church shall persist in rejecting this facility to its own indefinite extension, and at length its ultimate triumph over all its enemies. Let it but make the most of these new erections which, if but encouraged by itself, will multiply almost at pleasure upon our hands; and then will the church be on a patent way for taking immediate hold of the population, and so obtaining a complete and unrivalled ascendancy over them. All are aware of the virulent and too successful opposition that has been made to endowments. The undoubted effect of these we admit, were to give an advantage to the Establishment over Dissenters, by enabling us to meet the public on lower terms; and, viewing church accommodation in the light of a marketable commodity, by enabling us to undersell our competitors in the disposal of our seats. But who does not see that this very advantage might, to a certain extent, be secured to the church by her dispensing with a bond? It is instructive to observe the history

of the process during the last century,—the sixty-six places of worship which, throughout that period, have been added to the Establishment, while between three and four hundred have been contributed by the Dissenters to the great cause of Christian education. The truth is, that the new accommodation within the Establishment, was only to be had on higher terms, because bonds were more rigidly exacted, and stipends were necessarily higher. Even with stipends not lower than those of the Dissenters, we could, with the advantage of our gratuitous fabrics, raised by the friends of the church, in noble testimony of attachment to her cause, and munificently offered in free donation to the common people—we could hold out that cheaper accommodation which so alarms our enemies, and forms, with some at least, the animating principle, of their resistance to our undertaking. But this is the least of the two great facilities within the church's command, for, indispensable though moderate seat-rents be, for removing a barrier in the way of a general attendance, the great and efficient impulse to this movement, on the part of our now unprovided families, is the power which lies in her methods of territorial cultivation—an engine scarcely ever attempted by the sectarians, and to be wielded with full effect by the establishment alone. Would the church then but put forth her own great capabilities, the victory is hers. The great bulk of the population would give way before her. The people who now live in thousands without either a Sabbath service, or a pastoral and week-day ministration, would be reclaimed. This

is the great, the desirable conquest—a moral conquest over the profligacy and irreligion of those unhappy aliens, who are alike strangers to the church and to the meeting-house. Yet a certain collateral effect, along with this, would unquestionably follow. The same influences which are of power to recall these exiles within the pale of an ecclesiastical ministration, are also of power to detach the families of every cultivated district from one ministration to another. We should on this new system outrun the Dissenters, instead of being outrun by them, as on the old system; and that, in the proportion of three or four hundred to sixty-six. We should infallibly shoot ahead of them; and every year would witness the decline of their congregations, the greater part of them thinned, and a great part of them dispersed or broken up. It is in the language of confident, not of triumphant anticipation, that we thus speak. It is not a transference of old, but a creation of new worshippers, that our hearts are set upon. The annihilation of a meeting-house, if the lessons of the gospel were delivered there with fidelity and effect, is not an event to be rejoiced in. But it may become so, if instead of a seminary for that religion which inculcates a good and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, it becomes a school of disaffection, and of violent hostility to the best institutions of the land. They are the Dissenters themselves who have changed the character of this warfare. When we would have cherished them as the coadjutors, they have made themselves the enemies of the church; and thus, in the estimation of all who hold the Establishment to be a national

blessing, they have made it a patriotic thing, a matter of Christian philanthropy, to weaken and if possible remove the hostile influence which is bent on our destruction. It is clearly their opposition which has deferred, and perhaps defeated an endowment; and the church, on the other hand, will never force this barrier in the way of her own enlargement, if she cling so tenaciously to her bonds. She is fighting the cause of her deadliest adversaries by thus adhering to them. If she mean to prevail in the contest, she must throw aside this rusty and impracticable armour of former days. If she would only come down free-handed on the arena of this conflict, she were sure to carry it. If she fall, it will be by her own infatuation—because alike forgetful of her own great duties, she has failed to discharge them; and unconscious of her own great powers, she has abstained from putting them forth.*

* There is a peculiar difficulty in characterizing the views and principles of an adversary, when, instead of a single individual, we have whole bodies of men to deal with. Dissenters are not all Voluntaries, neither have all Voluntaries become so because alarmed for the stability of their own congregations. We should not indeed have ventured to allege this motive, had it not been openly avowed by some of their own number. But whether our opponents of this class be many or few, certain it is that we have men of undoubted piety and worth, who are Voluntaries on principle; and, unless in those cases where there is glaring evidence to the contrary, we are not at liberty to utter any other imagination respecting them. Such is the powerful though insensible effect of one's circumstances upon his opinions and views, that we might often find an adequate reason for the adverse judgment of others, without ascribing it to aught that is discreditable. When the chapel ministers were admitted into presbyteries, we took the liberty of predicting that the measure would prove unfavourable to the future extension of the church—not, most assuredly, because we thought worse of their disinterestedness or their integrity than of that of other men; but because we appre-

30. In conclusion, let it be observed that, while, on the one hand, it seems highly inexpedient for the Church to tie up her own hands, and in the

hended that the situation which they occupy might so far bias their understandings as to make them more indifferent than otherwise, if not hostile, to the multiplication of territorial churches. This carries in it no impeachment whatever against their honour or the purity of their motives—only it is fair that the same allowance which is made for the Voluntary ministers within the pale of the Establishment, should also be made for the Voluntary ministers beyond it.

We have lamented this new principle of Voluntaryism ever since its commencement; and that, not because of any apprehended danger to the existence of the Church, but because of the obstacle it has raised in the way of the Church's extension among the poor and working-classes of society. For the accomplishment of this object we hold an endowment to be indispensable; and it might have been an endowment not confined to the Establishment, as existing at present, but comprehensive of Dissenters on certain terms—terms which, but for this recent and unfortunate controversy, would have every day become more practicable. Mainly speaking, our theology is the same; and our points of difference, with the one great exception of the principle of an Establishment, are fast dwindling away both in number and estimation. What then should prevent a re-union, if not by a corporate act on the part of the Dissenters, at least by their individual ministers being welcomely received on the part of the Church, and in every instance where the position of the meeting-house and the circumstances of its population made it expedient, having parishes assigned to them? The statesman who carried an endowment that should apply, not to new erections alone, but to dissenting chapels on the moment of their incorporation with the Church, would confer a rich moral blessing on the people of Scotland.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to correct a misreport which appeared in a passage of our speech before the Presbytery of Edinburgh on this subject. We did not single out Dissenters as the objects of any severe or satirical remark. We spoke of Voluntaries, that is, not of the species but of the genus—for in as far as the ministers of our Establishment derive their whole remuneration from the means of their own people, they too, in circumstances, if not in principle, are Voluntaries. And again, we spoke only of those, (we trust only a very small number, for the feeling by which they are actuated is indeed a monstrous one,) who grudged the Christian instruction of the poor, because of the encroachment which it threatened even on the rich or paying members of their own congregation. Certain it is, that the same

terms of a rigid enactment, absolutely to prohibit a dispensation from a bond in all time coming, thus forestalling cases of most urgent necessity and

territorial church which draws to it the families of the working classes, may also draw to it the families of the middle and higher classes in society—just as in pulling up the tares there is a likelihood of pulling up the wheat along with them. And if there be men who can look with an evil eye to that process by which the many are reclaimed to the blessings of the gospel, because a comparatively few who attend their own ministrations are carried off along with them, they may well be said to look on the population of a city as they would on the fry of a rabbit-warren—that is, as a preserve for the Voluntaries, so that when the Church-Extensionists dare to enter with invading footstep on that domain which these Voluntaries hold to be rightfully and peculiarly their own, they are scowled upon as so many poachers. Such a monopoly as this is truly a hateful one. It is a sacrifice of the Christianity of the people in the bulk, that the Voluntary ministers may be left in undisturbed possession of the seat-rents which they draw from the wealthy hearers. Such treatment even of the inferior animals it is painful to think of; but it becomes quite dreadful when thus applied to human beings—or, in other words, in order that the Voluntary minister shall be protected in the secure hold which he now has of the best and fattest of them, we must leave all the rest to perish. Such is the wretched aspect and character of this question, a question between the Christianity of the many and the incomes of the few.

Before concluding this lengthened note, we cannot but advert to a preference which has been expressed by certain parties, who would meet the Church-Extensionists with a sort of half-way proposition, which, though better than nothing, is still far short of an act of justice to the population. Instead of new churches, they would have preaching stations, and these served not by ordained ministers but by unordained missionaries. Now it is well to begin and to break up the ground by means of missionaries; but it is not well to end there. The truth is, that the ordination which enables our ecclesiastical labourers to baptize the children of the people, and admit the people themselves to the sacrament, invests them with a tenfold influence over them. We were for postponing the admission of the chapel ministers to presbyteries until they obtained an endowment; for we really look on this preferment, (provided that they had sessions of their own, and that they were admitted to deliberate in presbyteries in every question which was brought by appeal or reference from these inferior judicatories,) as bestowing no sensible addition to that ascendancy, which they might earn among their people by

desirableness, which she leaves herself no discretion to provide for,—on the other hand, she has nothing to apprehend from the occasional dispensation for which we plead, lest it should rise into an evil of indefinite magnitude that will seriously affect either the usefulness or the respectability of our establishment. She has the remedy against this in her own hands. On the moment that such an evil is experimentally ascertained, and threatens to be more pernicious than profitable to the Church, she can instantly put a stop to the further extension of it. The Barrier Act forms we have ever

household and congregational services. On the same principle, we should not object now to a seat in the presbytery being made to depend upon a bond, even as before we would have made it to depend upon an endowment. Could this but reconcile the Church to a dispensation from bonds in those cases where it is necessary, we should rejoice in such a practical adjustment of a difficulty, which we fondly hope that the measure of a general endowment may soon put an end to. But here we are met with another difficulty in the strong juridical conceptions by which another class of our brethren are actuated—who, though friendly to a dispensation from bonds, would insist on all, whether bondless or bonded ministers, being alike members of the presbytery. In this warfare of clashing opinions, one is sometimes tempted to renounce all hopes of a right practical guidance for the vessel of the church, drifting in the midst of elements as wayward and as much beyond the reach of all calculation and control, as are the breezes of the capricious atmosphere, or the waves of the restless ocean.

Will those ministers who see a grievous anomaly in conferring ordination without a bond, but consider the multitude of licentiates in the Church of England, all of whom are in deacons' orders, and can baptize; and many of whom are in priests' orders also, and can administer the Lord's Supper,—yet have no parochial charge, and no church living of any sort? And do any evil consequences follow on this? None such at least as are apprehended by the sticklers for a bond,—none of that sectarian irregularity or extravagance, and certainly none of that degradation of the order in the estimation of general society, whereof they seem so mightily afraid.

thought a most important and beautiful feature in our constitutional machinery—both as affording a protection against all rash, and, at the same time, affording a facility to what may be called an experimental or tentative legislation. When we strenuously advocate the occasional dispensation from a bond, to be determined by the church-courts as the cases occur, we should regret if the overture imbodying this provision, were to be made the subject for some years at least, of more than an interim act, to be renewed from year to year in the General Assembly. In this state we should like it to remain for a time upon its trial, during which presbyteries might be looking on, and taking the lessons of experience from the actual working and progress of the new system. We of course would regret the instant rejection of the measure by our inferior judicatories; but we should even regret the instant and too speedy adoption of it. It is a measure on which we should like to wait the evolutions of actual experience—that it may pass into permanent law, only if found on the whole, to be innocent and beneficial, or be rejected by a majority of presbyteries. The mischief would thus be put a stop to; and what is better still, be easily repaired—amounting, as it would, only to a certain limited number of ill-constituted churches, for which the means might be provided of putting them on a more secure and sufficient foundation. We avow our own confidence in the happy result of such a process—that, under it, the spirit of liberality again let loose from that chilling apprehension of a bond which now has damped and well nigh

extinguished it, will continue to multiply our new churches as heretofore, and along with this, to build up an augmenting interest on the side of their endowment, which will at length extort the needful boon from the hands of a reluctant administration. The opposite policy to this—the policy of at all times, and with unexcepted rigour exacting a bond—we can view in no other light than as a monstrous infatuation—planting an obstacle in the way of that extension, by which alone the church can come into effective contact with the great bulk of her now unprovided families—limiting her own opportunities of great usefulness, and great consequent influence thereupon—and so cramping her own energies by the self-created fetters of her own forging, as to maintain an unequal struggle with those hostile sectarians, who range without any such impediment, over the whole length and breadth of the land. With but the same freedom—such is her native force,—she could make good an inconceivable superiority over all who now vilify and oppose her. Let her only break the withs that now encompass and restrain her; and like Samson of old, she will rise with giant strength, and make her enemies to wonder wherein it is that the secret of its greatness lies.

# APPENDIX.

By the overture now in progress through the church, it is proposed that a Bond for the minister's stipend should in all cases be required to the extent of not more than £80. The article which we should like to substitute in its place is, that in certain cases, a bond might be dispensed with. It is an article made up of two distinct parts. By the first we define the condition on which we should permit a dispensation. By the second, we do not enact against a bond; but leave the matter to the discretion of the church courts.

The whole of the substituted article runs thus:

"*Every constitution shall contain regulations as to the rate and mode of letting the seats suited to each particular case, but shall always provide that one-half thereof shall be let at an average not exceeding three shillings sterling per sitting per annum, and that as to all the sittings, parishioners shall have a preference to all others; and it shall be provided, that one per cent. on the original cost of the fabric, shall be set apart as a fund for repairing, enlarging, or rebuilding the church;*

"*The Presbytery shall judge according to the circumstances of each case, (subject always to review by the General Assembly,) of the amount of stipend proposed, and of the security which may exist, or shall be provided for such stipend; and every constitution shall contain a provision, that the Presbytery shall be entitled from time to time to augment the stipend, according to the increase of the said funds.*"

No. VIII.

THE

# EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLES

A

## GUIDE AND AN AUTHORITY

FOR

## THE CONDUCT OF CLERGYMEN

IN THE

## ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC CHARITIES.

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[*The following exposition of the principles of the Apostle may serve to evince the way in which the Extension of our Church might subserve the extinction of Scottish pauperism.*]

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"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—1 *Tim.* v. 8

THERE has been a considerable revolution of late years in our tone of sentiment about the duty which lies upon us, of relieving the wants and the sufferings of others. It is now the doctrine of the most enlightened economists, that great mischief results from the public and ostentatious nature of many of our charities. Every man may make himself poor if he likes; and though no man likes poverty on its own account, yet there are many, and very many, who like the temptations and pleasures which lie scattered along the road that leads to poverty. Even the grim prospect of

all those wants and hardships which wait him at the end of his journey, is often not sufficient to deter a man from venturing on the joys and allurements of the journey itself—and thus it is that the melancholy upshot of a destitute old age, and a beggared family, does not keep an infatuated father from being an idler, or a drunkard, or a spendthrift. Such is the power of present enjoyment to tempt and to solicit the appetites of the moment, that he will be any thing to attain ease and gratification in the mean time; and by a desperate plunge among the most ruinous indulgences will he dissipate all his anxieties, and smother the anticipation of all those miseries and horrors which futurity has in reserve for him.

Now if even with the assurance of poverty before him, and his eye full upon all its sufferings, he is often not able to resist the influence of temptation, with what effect it must tell in lessening his motives to resistance, should he know that there are ample relief and protection held out to him by the institutions of his country—should the spectre which appalled him at the outset of his mad career, and made him hesitate and stop before he entered upon it, be stripped of its horrors —should the avenue, instead of being guarded as before by the image of a desolate and unprovided outcast, invite his approach to it by holding out as the termination of his course the shade and shelter of a poor-house to him and to his family. Why, you may easily conceive that if our charities are so paraded before the eyes of the public, as to invite the notice of the labourer, and furnish him with an

element of calculation, you seduce the man who but for you might have reared his children by the industry of his own hands, you seduce him from the honest independence of his principles. You tempt him from his habits of sobriety. You do all that in you lies to create a depraved and a beggarly population—and when deafened with the clamours of the trooping multitude you yourselves have summoned around you, you will have the sure mortification of finding that after you give bread to all and raiment to all, there are still among the modest uncomplaining poor, whom these louder and hardier petitioners have left behind them, as many wants to relieve, as much suffering to attend to, and as ample a field for the exercise of all the private charities as ever.

This then is a subject on which the lessons of everyday experience are at one with the speculations of an enlightened philosophy—and the degree of attention which it has excited of late years has certainly given rise to a new tone of principle respecting it. Still, however, the revolution of sentiment is far from being general. There is an air of hardihood in the speculation, which the sons and the daughters of sensibility are found to recoil from—and who can be so monstrous as to persist in his argument, when at the hazard of doing offence to the soft and weeping sympathies of our nature? I have met with something like a shout of execration lifted up against the best friends of the poor, because, in addition to the feelings of the heart, they have also given the labours of the understanding to the subject of their interests and

concerns—because, in addition to the exercises of compassion, they have done what the Bible calls upon us to do, they have bestowed their consideration on the poor—because they have pressed the higher faculties of the mind into the service of those whose vice or misfortune have degraded to the lowest place in the scale of the community—and because it sometimes happens, as it does in many other departments of human life, where the judgment goes one way and the feelings another, that the path pointed out by the cool eye of the understanding is different from that through which we are often driven heedlessly along, by the impulse of an urgent but often blind and unreflecting sensibility.

This is not the place for a lecture on political economy—nor shall I attempt to lay before you at greater length the bearing of its soundest principles on the question before us. But believing as I do, that they obtain a powerful reinforcement from the principles of the New Testament, I think I shall serve the cause more effectually with my Christian hearers, by laying before you what is recorded there of a great public charity which was instituted in the days of the apostles. The lesson of my text will find its best illustration, I conceive, in the reflections suggested by the progress of the narrative; and happy shall I be, if, through the powerful aid of Scripture example, I can say any thing to enlighten the beneficence of the rich, or to impress on the poor the duty and the dignity which belong to them.

The rapid progress of the Christian faith in

Jerusalem soon drew the notice of the rulers, and brought down all their violence on its disciples. It does not appear from the history that they proceeded immediately to any direct attack on the property of the new converts. Still, however, you can conceive how the hostility of the upper ranks in society to the Christian faith would affect the subsistence of many of those who had espoused the profession of it—how Christian servants would be discarded from their places, and Christian tradesmen from their employment, and the Christian owners of shops be abandoned by their customers, and thus men who were before in ease and sufficiency would be reduced by the bold step they had taken to the description of the poor saints which are in Jerusalem. But so long as persecution had not risen to such a degree of injustice, as to wrest from men the wealth they were in actual possession of, there was one and only one expedient that could be used for repairing the loss of their maintenance to those who were thus forced away from all their accustomed resources. The men of capital among them could dispose of all that they had, and put the price of it into a common treasury for the behoof of their whole body. This very peculiar proceeding then was actually adopted, to meet the no less peculiar necessity of the times which called for it. The tie of one common enthusiasm bound together the members of this infant community—for the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things

common. And then it is that we read in the Acts of the Apostles—how, in spite of the shock which must have been given to the industry of the new converts, "there was not any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to every one according as he had need."

It would appear from this passage then, that the apostles were vested with the management of this public fund. There can be no doubt that while they were engaged in the distribution of it, they were engaged in the performance of a good work. It was an employment which laid before them a fine field for the useful and benevolent exercises. After the labours of the day were over, they could tell of the many families they had relieved—and the many affecting cases of comfort and sufficiency scattered among the habitations of poverty, which they were called to witness in the course of their ministrations. Yet these apostles had the hardihood to propose that all this work should be shifted away from them. They said that good as it was, it was not reasonable that it should be fastened upon them. It encroached upon that time which they thought they could employ to a still better and more benevolent purpose. They were the ministers of that wealth which is incorruptible and eternal, and they thought that the task of ministering the other kind of wealth should devolve exclusively upon others. Their high office was to distribute among the people the

meat that endureth; and they thought that the labour of distributing the meat that perisheth should be consigned to some among themselves, who could just do the thing as wisely and as effectively as they. I do not know if the argument I am now to submit to you entered also into their calculation; but sure I am it ought to be a most prevailing argument, even with those who underrate the peculiar work of a minister, and have no value for any kind of benevolence but that which points to the temporal relief and accommodation of others. They may have said—Suffer us to keep exclusively by our work—and though we do not engage directly in these deeds of usefulness, we shall ultimately be the means of scattering them in greater abundance over the face of society. Our business is with the minds and the principles of men; and if you leave us to prosecute this business without distraction—you may not see the same quantity of direct and visible beneficence coming out of our hands, but you will see more sons and more daughters turned unto righteousness by the undivided labours of our ministry, and each of these will just do as much in this way as any individual amongst us is able for. Our immediate business is not to perform these good works, but to multiply the workers—not to spend our time upon the deeds, but to labour in the far higher and more productive sphere of furnishing you with doers. It is not our object to give our own hands to the mechanical execution of a work of utility—but to devote our understandings and our consciences to the higher office of reforming the souls of men;

and when we succeed in doing so, we shall never fail to send the impulse of benevolence into their hearts. If our time be kept sacred and inviolable for our separate employment, you may not meet with us so often in the bustle of active and charitable societies; but you may meet with hundreds in our stead, each of them furnished perhaps by our means with a living principle of readiness for all good works. It would be a strange way of multiplying manufactured goods to hurry away the inventors, or the makers of steam engines from their employment, and lay upon them the manual drudgery of your looms and of your workshops. This would be preposterous enough; but not more preposterous I contend, than to belabour a minister of the gospel with all the mechanical servilities of benevolence—when if you would let him alone, he may work up a number of living and efficient machines, each as operative as himself; and which could be brought to bear on every institution in the list of your charities, and every unexplored haunt of wretchedness amongst you.

I do not know whether this latter argument occurred to the apostles. Perhaps not. They seem to have had their minds engrossed with the superior greatness of eternity. But as a proof that they did not leave the demands of time unprovided for—while they withdrew themselves from the management of the public fund, they supplied the vacancy with some of those virtuous and benevolent men whom they had formed by their instructions. They said, "It is not reason that we should

leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, my brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." It is of importance to know that by the last enumeration of the Christians in Jerusalem, they amounted to about five thousand, that the number of the apostles was twelve; and yet, extraordinarily gifted as they were, they conceived the management of the poor of this small body to be a burden too heavy for them. They resisted it as an unfair encroachment upon the time that should be given to their own peculiar services—and impressed as they were with the duty of giving themselves wholly to these things, they did not rest till they got the whole of this burden shifted away from them.

We now lose sight of this great public charity. It is probable that in a few years, when persecution rose to a greater height of violence in Jerusalem, the capital which kept it agoing was wrested away from it by a direct act of confiscation. Certain it is that that society, whose members are described at the outset as standing in need of nothing, were afterwards reduced to great distress—so that Paul the apostle of the Gentiles had to set on foot subscriptions in their behalf among his numerous congregations. And we read in a subsequent part of the evangelical history, both of his exertions and of their liberalities, in behalf of the poor saints which were at Jerusalem.

But it is of importance to attend to the operation of a similar system in other places. On this subject we have no direct information; but, in addition to the incidental traces of such a system to be met with in the epistles of Paul, it is surely no violent work of the fancy to suppose, that the impulse of the new doctrines would have a most liberalizing effect on the hearts of those who embraced them. It is no violent supposition that the prospect of immortality clothed in greater brilliancy than it had ever yet been, and brought so home to their conceptions by the fact of that recent and wonderful resurrection to which the apostles gave witness, would make one and all of them sit looser than before to the interests and possessions of the present life. There is surely every reason for believing, that the sympathy of that common faith, which so separated and signalized them from the rest of the world, would bind them together in one close and endearing system of fellowship—and that, in the first instance, there would exist in every new church as great a security against the distresses to which its poorer members were exposed, as the capital of the wealthier brethren under the direction of a powerfully excited benevolence could possibly confer. In these circumstances it is highly probable, not merely that there would exist the utmost readiness on the part of those who were able to open their doors and purses to the more distressed and destitute of the brethren—but that there would be something like a public stock formed by the con-

tributions of the wealthy, both for the maintenance of the poor, and the general expenses of the society.

This supposition is confirmed by a few incidental passages in the New Testament, to which we have no time at present to direct your attention; and it serves as a key to the solution of some verses which would be otherwise inexplicable. You will observe, in the first instance, that though persecution was the general lot of the earlier Christians, there were intervals of time when the progress of Christianity escaped the notice and molestation of persecutors. During such intervals, then, the existence of such a fund would hold out a strong inducement to the idle to embrace the profession of the truth. They might derive a portion of their subsistence from this fund, without working for it; and, at all events, they had a better chance of obtaining a share of that kindness and liberality and openness of heart and of home which marked the private Christians of that period. Conceive an individual to have renounced his profession of infidelity, and become a professing Christian, under the impulse of a motive so unworthy and disgraceful as this; and you will be at no loss to understand why Paul delivers himself so strongly and so indignantly as he does in the verse before us. Better he had remained a pagan as he was, than come in among us upon an inducement so sordid. Better he had been an open and declared enemy at this hour, than put on the profession of a friend, that he may feed and regale himself in indolence at the expense of our society. He who burdens

the church or any of its members with that family which he may and ought to provide for, has a lower place in our estimation than he who keeps without its pale; and thus it is that "he who provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

This explanation serves also to throw light on the following passage:—"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

Again, let it be remarked, that out of this public fund the maintenance of the teachers would be defrayed, as well as the maintenance of the poor; and thus would abuses break in upon the Christian church from another quarter. Some would aspire to be teachers, not merely from the natural love of distinction, but also from the sure subsistence that this employment brought along with it. With men of no conscience it was an idle and an easy way of gaining a livelihood; and whether they were recognized officially by the church as teachers or not, still if they could gain a reputation for their divinity among private Christians, this would secure them a liberal share in their hospitalities. Take this along with you, and it serves to throw light on another set of passages. "Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that

gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself." "After my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." "Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins." "Feed the flock of God which is among you, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." "Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you." "Woe to them, for they are greedy after the error of Balaam, for reward; and they are spots in your feasts of charity when they feast with you; feeding themselves without fear, and their mouths speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

I come now to the noble example set by the Apostle Paul in this matter; and you will perceive how easy it is to explain the very great importance which he attached to a circumstance that appears, at first sight, to bear no proportion to the stress he lays upon it. I allude to the scrupulous disinterestedness of Paul in abstaining from the acceptance of any temporal fee or reward, or even so much as the necessaries of life, from certain churches which he himself had founded, and among which he laboured for many months in word and doctrine. He at all times asserted in the most unqualified manner his right to a maintenance. "The labourer is worthy of his reward." "It is the ordination of the Lord that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel—and if we have sown unto you spiri-

tual things, is it a great thing if we should reap your carnal things?" But though all this was his undoubted right, yet there were certain cases where in practice he studiously abstained from it. The thing in itself was a trifle; but the enlightened eye of Paul looked forward to consequences, and he saw that, in particular churches, the fact of his being chargeable to them would be abused, to the defeat of his ministry and the perversion of his example amongst them; and he was determined to work with his own hands, rather than be burdensome, and to suffer all things, rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

You will observe, in the first instance, that he had rival teachers to struggle with, who preached another gospel than that which he preached—who preached Christ of contention, and not sincerely—who perverted and troubled the churches by the foolish questions which they started, and at times attempted a reputation among the people, by taking no reward for their exertions, and thus maintaining a show of disinterested zeal for their welfare. Paul felt that he behoved to outrival these teachers in all their pretensions; and it is with a view to strip them of their pernicious influence, that he so often tells his people of the purity of his own doings, and insists upon it to such a degree as, had we been ignorant of his reason, would have looked like a mere parading of himself, for the gratification of his own vanity. He felt the delicacy of thus taking upon him so anxious and laboured a vindication of himself; but he felt also that the good of his churches required it; and therefore it

is that he says to his congregation at Corinth, "I was chargeable to no man, and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall strip me of this boasting in the region of Achaia. And what I do I will do that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion. And seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also." I have no doubt that the same principle mingled in his farewell address to the elders of the church at Ephesus; and after he had foretold to them that of their own selves men should arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, he proposes his own disinterested example to their imitation—how he had coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel—and had showed to them that so labouring they ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But again, I stated to you that out of the one fund which defrayed all the public expense of the church, it was highly probable that both the poor would get their relief, and the minister would get his maintenance. Now there are various traces to be met with in the New Testament, of the abuse which was practised by the idle, both on the fund of the church and upon the liberality of private individuals. It in some instances created such a relaxation of industry, as to call forth the severe and indignant asseveration of the text. Now there is no one point for which Paul made greater sacrifices than to keep alive the delicacy and honest

independence of the poor. And as they got their relief out of the same fund which would have furnished him with the maintenance he had a right to, what was the singular expedient to which he resorted? Why he forbore the assertion of the right which belonged to him. He set them an example of delicacy at the idea of being burdensome on the public fund, so scrupulous that he himself would not touch one farthing of it. This is the high moral lesson with which he all along endeavoured to exalt the feelings and principles of the poor; and, to force it the more effectually upon their consciences, do we behold the man upon whom lay the care of all the churches—who preached and who journeyed, and who performed prodigies of apostolical labour—do we behold him, I say, finding time and strength for the labour of an ordinary workman; and, to shame and convince others into a right sense of independence, does the magnanimous Paul set himself down to the occupation of a tent-maker, that he may have to say to the poorest and the meanest among them, "Ye yourselves know how mine own hands ministered to my own necessities."

He does not leave us to conjecture the motive of this extraordinary proceeding, for he himself openly announces it. He wished to impress on the receivers of charity how it was more blessed to give than to receive. "Ye yourselves know how ye ought to follow us, for we did not eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you. Not because we have not

power, but to make ourselves an ensample to you to follow us."

Now couple this part of Paul's history with what I have already laid before you out of the history of the other apostles. They had, in the first instance, got themselves involved in the management of a business, which had for its object the administration of positive relief to those who were in need of it. There were no less than twelve of them, and not many more than five thousand people under them —a number greatly below the population of many a parish. They could have taken their turn, and relieved one another in the ministration of the public charity which had been set up in Jerusalem. But no. They chose rather to decline; and, upon the principle that their peculiar employment as spiritual labourers ought not to be trenched upon by any such matter, they succeeded in getting themselves clear of the whole business. Compare the number and amount of their ministerial engagements with those which crowded singly and individually on the apostle of the Gentiles. Look to the unwearied activity of his labours, and take a survey of the variety and extent of them. Surely we would have thought that he had much less time to spare than any of them; and yet though they grudged the time given to the employment of making the poor independent of want by the kindness of others, he did not grudge the time given to the employment of setting such an example to the poor as, if followed, would make them independent of want by the work of their own hands. The twelve apostles would not suffer the employment

of givers to encroach on the work of the ministry. The Apostle Paul, though burdened with this work to a greater extent than any of them, let himself down to the additional burden of a mechanical employment, that he might elevate the principles of the poor, and lift them, by the exertion of their own honourable industry, above the necessity of being receivers. Bring these two pieces of evangelical history alongside of one another, and apart altogether from the principles of political science, —tell me, on the mere sanction of Bible authority, whether the dispensation of positive relief to the poor, or the deposition in their hearts of a principle of reluctance to the burdening of others, is counted by the apostle to be the higher deed of beneficence, or the better and more Christian expedient for doing away the wants and sufferings of the species.

I have thus finished all the historical part of my intended exposition; nor do I need to detain you long with the inference. It is, in the first instance, obvious enough, that though the ministration of positive relief to those who are actually in need of it, be a requirement that lies upon all—yet the time of a Christian teacher is too precious to be taken up with the business of any public ministration. It is not reason that he should leave the work of God for any such employment. The argument is most conclusive, and it suits itself to every one species of objection which can be raised against it. Do you talk of the goodness of the work? Why then withdraw the minister from the most efficient way of accomplishing it, by spread-

ing the principle of Christian benevolence around him, and thus doing what in him lies to raise and to multiply the workers. And remember that there are two ways of doing the work. You may relieve a man after he has become poor; or you may settle such habits and principles in his heart as will, by their operation, prevent him from becoming poor. The twelve apostles took the first way of it for a time, but at length gave it up. Paul took the second way of it; and, by the mighty influence of his example and his argument, we have no doubt that he was the instrument of perpetuating the comfort of many a poor family, by keeping him who was at the head of it to the industry of his own hands, and the honourable independence of his own exertions. Now a minister of the gospel may still take this most productive way of it. The time which is now given to what is, at least, the most hazardous and questionable employment of helping on the public charities, might be spent among the habitations of the poor, on the noble employment of ministering to the elevation of their souls, and of extinguishing all that is sordid and dishonourable within them by the powerful corrective of Christian principle. Now this he may do without departing, by a single iota, from the strict line of his ministerial services. He may solace and dignify the poor by the courteousness of his personal attentions. He may dispense what, I can attest, they have refinement enough to appreciate more highly than all the food and raiment you can bestow upon them: he may dispense among them the benefit of his prayers—the tender admonitions

of a heart which they know to be in earnest about their most substantial welfare—the affectionate entreaties of a pastor, whose love they feel and they rejoice in; and who, though he has nothing in his hand to give them as the agent of a public charity, can, out of the good treasure of his heart, impart those virtuous principles of conduct which do more even for the temporal provision of the poor than all the paraded charities of the land. There is nothing mysterious in the principle we insist upon. It is just because the healthful infusion of Christian sentiment among the lower orders of the community carries along with it a sobriety, and an industry, and an attention to the moral habits and characters of children, that a minister may, if left without disturbance to prosecute his spiritual labours among them, rear all the elements of comfort and independence in the bosom of many families. And it is grievous to think that an order so beautiful, and so distinctly pointed out by the example of the apostles, should be so miserably reversed—that the teachers of the gospel should be stationed at the wrong end, and posted exactly in opposition to that place which both the principles of the Bible and the soundest principles of political economy point out for them—that they should be withdrawn for a single moment from the high exercise of dealing with the hearts and the principles of men, and made to dissipate their strength and their time in a work which hundreds can do as well as them—a work which, at the best, is questionable in its tendency, and, according to my humble opinion, aggravates the very mischief it is set up to extirpate.

But this inference I perhaps do wrong in expatiating upon at so much length. The inference in which you, my poorer hearers, are concerned, is the duty which lies upon you, to work with your own hands, rather than be burdensome. Let every Christian principle within you be summoned up to the noble exercise of struggling with the difficulties of your situation. Were this made a point of duty among the poor, it would go to diminish, to an inconceivable extent, the number of dependents either on the funds of the public, or on the benevolence of private individuals. But would it go to annihilate poverty? No. We shall always have the poor with us. The poor of necessity—the poor of unavoidable misfortune—the poor by the cruelty of accident—the poor by the direct visitations of Heaven—the blind, and the dumb, and the cripple, and the deranged—these are all raised around us by Providence, and they cast their imploring looks at us, and they knock at the door of our hearts; and they serve to try the liberality of our principles and the unweariedness of our well-doing. Now mark what the humblest workman among you may contribute to the cause. I speak not of the sum you may have given to the collection of this day*—though it may, perhaps, be as much for you as the splendid offerings of the wealthy. But I speak of the far greater sum you have made over to those who are poorer than yourselves, by providing for those of your own house by the industry of your own hands. You have

* Preached in behalf of some charity.

made over the whole sum which might otherwise have been given to the relief of your unprovided families—you have left it free and untouched in the hands of your superiors, for other deeds of charity. All of what this honest labourer and that frugal housewife would have gotten for their ragged and destitute children, had the one been more idle and the other more thriftless than we actually find them;—all this, I say, is in reserve for those who are still needier and more helpless than themselves. The immediate giver of the charity carries off the whole applause of an undiscerning world; but theirs also is a labour of love which will not be forgotten; and to them belong the credit and reward of the best benefactors of the species.

Thus, in one sense of the word, does the description of the apostle belong to you. They were poor, yet they made many rich. You are poor; but by struggling against the necessity of obtaining relief for yourselves, you make that relief to be poured in greater abundance on others. Give what you can afford; and if there is a man among you who, unable to give, can still afford to shift for himself, and out of his hard earnings to accomplish the rearing of his family, then I say of him, that, though he has not a farthing to bestow, he has a share in all the charities of the land. He has not made any positive addition to the funds of benevolence, but he has left these funds entire and unexhausted for other purposes. He has helped the cause as well as the ablest amongst us. Out of the sweat of his brow he has given succour to the destitute; nor can I refuse him the testimony,

when I think how hardly he toils and how poorly he fares for it, that, in the noblest and most substantial sense of the term, he is the friend of the poor, and takes his full share in the burden of relieving them.

END OF VOLUME EIGHTEENTH.

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